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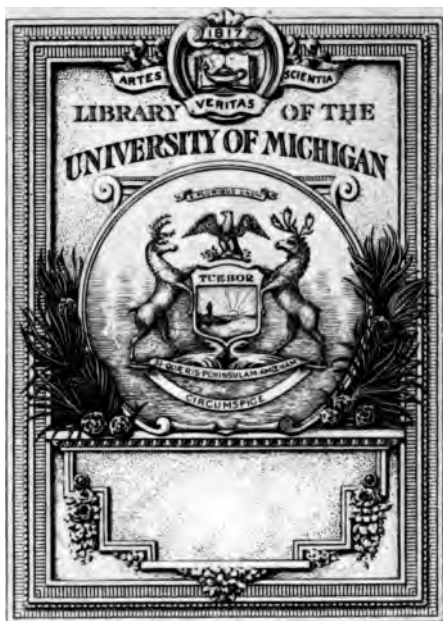
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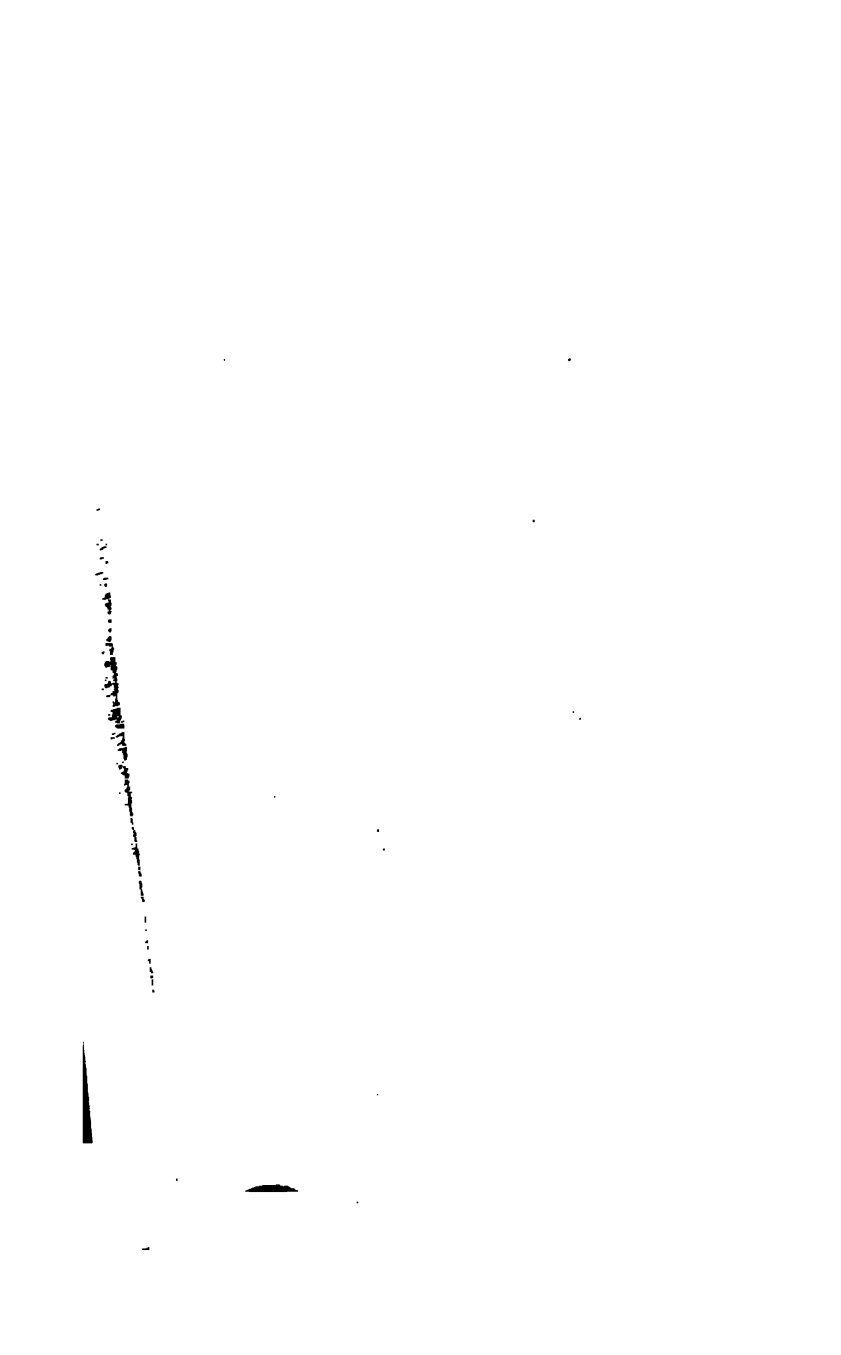
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DR. JOHNSON. (*Boswell's*)





THE BOOK  
OF  
HUMAN CHARACTER.

BY  
CHARLES BUCKE, Esq.

---

'The proper study of Mankind is MAN.'—POPE.

—————'The spacious west,  
And all the teeming regions of the south,  
Hold not a quarry to the curious flight  
Of knowledge, half so tempting and so fair  
As MAN to MAN.'—AKENSIDE.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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From courts, from councils, and from parliaments,  
From camps, from castles, and from cottages,  
From ancient wisdom, and from modern skill,  
I've drawn these secrets.

**DURING** the period of writing these Commentaries, I divested myself of all prejudice and resentment, affection and fear. I have spoken of **MEN**, of **THINGS**, and of **CIRCUMSTANCES**, therefore, as I faithfully believe them to exist; and a **LOVE** of **TRUTH** having guided my pen, the **LOVE** of **TRUTH**, in the moments of error, must be my appeal, apology, and consolation.

In an age fertile in vapours, meteors, and delusions, I have ventured, in many instances, to write with an uncompromising severity. Not, however, in the spirit of a soldier, or of an assassin, but in that of a surgeon, who would extract a gangrene from the interior of the

body. VIRTUE I have met with a timid and respectful countenance; but PREJUDICES and EVILS, VICES and CRIMES, I have engaged, as it were, hand to hand, and face to face. I have, in fact, endeavoured to strip man of his glosses and his presumption: and having no points, which I desire to convey covertly or with timidity, and as the far greater proportion of these Papers demand a wide, and even an active, application, I confess that I am animated with a desire of insinuating their essence into the mental veins and fibres of mankind: happy in the consciousness, that where I have erred, greater experience will hereafter be able to correct; and that where I have failed, superior judgments will command success.

All I desire is to be useful in ‘the days of my pilgrimage;’ and as MAN is, next to those of the UNIVERSE and the CREATOR of it, the finest, the most magnificent, and the most dangerous subject, that can engage the intellect of man; some honour will, perhaps, be conceded to one, who, disregarding all considerations of pleasure, profit, and affection, has dared the awful design of detecting and unfolding the mys-

teries of human action; of sounding the depths of human policy; and of engaging, with a decided and unflinching hand, the enemies of mankind.

I cannot say with Comus—

‘ I know each lane, and every alley green,  
Dingle and bushy dell of this wild wood,  
And every bosky bourn from side to side ;’

But,—and I say it more in sorrow than in triumph,—the world has been, even from an early age, my school, my theatre, and arena; my prison; and, I had almost said, my—sepulchre! It may, therefore, fully be understood, that some truths have been detected, which have hitherto passed for untruths; and some untruths, which have hitherto been admired as truths.

In fact, these Papers will, I hope, be found full of results: and arising,—as I am *sure* they do,—from an extensive course of reading, unwearied observation, and unsleeping ambition; conscious, that they have, also, been written in all the health of an unbiassed and unshackled mind; in a spirit to be elevated by no success, and shattered by no want of it, I submit them, cheer-

fully and confidently, to the consideration and use of all those who disdain fetters; who live and converse peaceably, candidly, and consistently; who abhor persecution in whatever shape it may appear; and who indulge others, without any desire of injury or molestation, in the honest, natural, and transcendent privilege of thinking for themselves.

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# THE BOOK

OF

## HUMAN CHARACTER.

---

### I.

WHO ACQUIRE AN EARLY KNOWLEDGE OF MANKIND.

‘ Consider what I told you. You are young ;  
Unapt for worldly business. Is it fit,  
One of such tenderness, so delicate,  
Should know so much ? ’—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

WHEN the guardians of ERASMUS desired him to be admitted as a regular in a convent—‘ No,’ answered he, ‘ I will not. I neither know what the world is, what ‘ a monastery is, nor what I am myself. I think it, ‘ therefore, advisable to continue a few years more in ‘ the schools, that I may become better acquainted with ‘ myself.’ Nothing was ever more shrewdly said by a young man of seventeen.

I admire truth to break in upon me, little by little ; as objects meet the eye in some of Rembrandt’s best pictures, hung in a dark room. Confidence begets confidence ; doubt begets doubt ; but great confidence, when once abused, sometimes begets an extremity of suspicion and jealousy. Some men provoke others to overreach them by distrust ;—the disgrace of being thought un-

worthy of confidence, according to Seneca, justifying the previous deceit. No! distrust, on one side, is no justification for deceit on the other. On the contrary, the consequent deceit justifies the previous distrust. We have no right thus to take the law into our own hands. Distrust is odious enough; but experience teaches that distrust is not a proof of baseness, provided a man has reached the age of thirty-five.

Young men are proud of being thought to know the world! Whom, however, do they resemble?—the traveller, who returned to his native village, full of knowledge in respect to the interior structure of Diana's temple at Ephesus: he had seen much; for he had entered the portico!

In ninety instances out of a hundred, a prematurity of worldly knowledge is a dishonour. To know at forty is the business and duty of all; to know at twenty argues, impressively, bad examples, a vicious education, or a degenerate,—at least a dubious,—disposition. Let no one, therefore, seek to draw childhood from children, or virility from youth; since the practice is but too sure to entail upon them, in return, a sere adolescence, a sterile manhood; a yellow age.

If an early knowledge of the world guard us from many serious difficulties, it plunges us, too often, into others still more irremediable. For if the errors of Petion, the celebrated mayor of Paris, were to be attributed to his having formed too favourable an opinion of human nature and of the French in particular, the early knowledge of Mirabeau brought him to a premature death, and that of the Duke of Orleans to a public scaffold.

Knowing some things late is, for the most part, like coming out of a dark cave into the sunshine, and seeing before us a beautiful and extensive landscape. But knowing MEN late has not always this result ; since prejudice is but too likely to have placed such a weight upon the lids, that they will open only to a very limited extent.

While I confine myself to my own house, garden, library, and family circle, I seem as if I have the whole universe of nature and society, whether relating to the past or the present, at my command. But the moment I enter society, where all things are valued for their appearances, and their appearances almost entirely, the scene is altered, and I feel less than a bird. I return to my books and my circle, laugh at what I have witnessed, and, magnifying into a whale, feel inclined to exclaim,

‘ Let those who lagg’d now ambulate the more ;  
And those laugh loud who never laugh’d before.’

## II.

## WHO KNOW MANKIND INTUITIVELY.

At the “ Rainbow.” Julius there ; one of those, who hide their heads, like the ostrich and the crocodile, and then think no one can see any part of their bodies.

—— ‘ Stat lumine clauso  
Ridendum revoluta caput ; creditque latere,  
Quæ non ipsa videt ——’ *Claudian.*

This acquaintance of mine considers his own mind as a problem, which no one can solve ; and yet as having



the privilege of solving the characters of others in a manner, conformable with his own notions, vices, and virtues. A child, however, can detect him; and here we may not hesitate to remember that children have the power of detecting, with quickness and subtlety, many defects that escape the observation of men of experience.

In respect to knowing mankind, some persons seem to have that art intuitively. They live in comparative solitude; and yet know all the springs of human action. More especially do they know

‘Where fear, mistrust, malevolence abide,  
And impotent desire, and disappointed pride.’

A person of this sort gave me, the other day, as the result of his experience, that the most general difficulties, his friends and neighbours had to contend with, were that of separating appearances from realities, and that of submitting to temporary inconveniences for the sake of an ulterior good. ‘I do not say,’ concluded he, ‘that such is the case with all men; but I have ‘found it to be the general case in my village. I have ‘scarcely one single neighbour or friend, that has any ‘true command or true knowledge of himself; and it is ‘not improbable that you may say the same of me.’

Massillon lived in retirement, and yet he entered deeply into subjects of real life. In fact,—to know men, it is not necessary always to be acting on a public theatre; though it is certain, that most men must act before they can judge; few having resembled Massillon.

Walpole lived in the world, partook of its government, and then retired into himself. Indeed, most of his works were written in retirement. Perhaps no

man ever lived, who knew better what men are susceptible of than Walpole; yet his delineations are very little to be trusted. They are 'lively,' 'bitter,' 'epigrammatic,' and 'concise;' any thing rather than implicitly true. He hated Lord Hardwicke, despised the Duke of Newcastle, disliked the Pelhams, abhorred Pulteney, contemned the Duke of Cumberland, detested his uncle, and despised his nephew. His characters of those persons, therefore, are not to be relied upon; yet it is not the less true, that no man, more than he, knew what men in elevated life are capable of. It is one thing to know, and another to apply. He had small notions and narrow views, was ever meddling in small matters, and wrote a tragedy, which no woman can look into, and which no man of common delicacy could have written; yet which many puerile,—I will not say corrupt,—critics have compared to the *Œdipus* of Sophocles. *Mons! Mus!*

Walpole had little insight into the characters of elevated minds; but of weak and superficial ones he had more than a competency of knowledge. Knaves and fools he could hit off to the life; but most others he spelt backwards, as it were; and yet so artfully, that, by the many, he has been regarded as an exceedingly great authority! And wherefore?—because he was a master of the ridiculous, and put the worst constructions upon all men's actions.

As a poet, he had no power of touching the passions or filling the imagination; as a romance writer, he has passed from the admiration of the young; as a critic, he may be judged of by his low appreciation of Thom-

son and Akenside. The character of his mind was, in fact, like the character of his heart;—fastidious, artificial, and capricious; and he played with the reputations of men and women as a cat plays with a mouse.

## III.

## WHO SEE FAMILIAR OBJECTS LATE.

I HAD heard of, and read of, the death-watch all my life; and yet I never heard the tickings of one till I was fifty-two. To see things all our lives, and never to examine them, is common enough. Who has not beheld daisies and buttercups all the days of their lives? and yet scarcely one man in ten thousand has examined either; and, as to knowing to what classes and orders they belong, you may as well ask the names of them in Coptic, Hebrew, or Sanscrit.

In Switzerland, the Tyrol, among the Apennines, and the valleys intersecting the Pyrenees, the clouds frequently form over, and a stranger would be inclined to inquire, where are the mountains of which I have heard so much? There are none to be seen! We may even travel through the whole of them, and not once see their summits. This seems to me to be truly the case with those, who traverse the world from infancy to age, and never see, as it were, more than the feet of the mountains.

This is one of the many reasons why life appears so dull, after a certain round is compassed. Objects and pursuits lose their interest; the blood circulates slowly; and a lamentation is heard, that life is of little or no

value ; yet where virtue is, life is most precious. When the mind has once been opened to the secrets of the universe, there is always something to enjoy ; and the prospect of a magnificent future becomes a reward for every evil that is past. Vain man ! Your apathy, or your affliction, arises, not from any legitimate want ; but from the circumstance that the pleasures of the senses can no longer be adequately enjoyed. A faithful knowledge of the uses, to which life may be devoted, is as much to be appreciated before the capacity of the senses, as invention and design, composition, expression, and character, are to be preferred in a painting, to colouring, chiaro-oscuro, and execution.

## IV.

## WHO SEE DOUBLE—SHORT-SIGHTED PERSONS.

GOLDSMITH relates, that a fly's eye having been placed in a manner to admit its being seen through by means of a microscope, it was discovered, ' that the power it ' possessed of multiplying and diminishing objects was ' incalculable ; so that a single soldier appeared, when ' viewed through it, a whole army of soldiers \*.'

One would think, that some men had eyes of this

\* ' In the common fly are seen two small round projections at the ' side of the head. These projections contain many thousands of ' lenses disposed in rows, each one of which is capable of transmit- ' ting an impression of outward objects. A German naturalist ' counted 6236 in the two eyes of a silk-worm. Another naturalist ' counted 14,000 in the eyes of a drone fly ; and 27,000 in the eyes ' of a dragon fly. It has been proved by actual experiment with ' the help of glasses, that each one of these lenses was capable of

kind, and some exactly the reverse ; for they exaggerate or diminish numbers in a very extraordinary manner. Millions in their algebra being tens, and tens millions.

Persons of short sight and of imperfect hearing lose many common enjoyments, both of nature and art. Johnson saw with difficulty, and his auricular organs were imperfect. This was the true reason why he had little taste for painting, and none for music. Even beauty was lost upon him ; and nature herself blushed, or looked green, without eliciting a single smile of admiration. Many are the evils arising out of imperfection of hearing and shortness of sight !

## V.

## WHO LOSE IN EFFECT BY LIVING IN PRIVACY.

It is natural for some minds to love and to solicit retirement. It was a prevailing appetite, in my younger days ; to which some were more immediately invited by Zimmerman's well-known work on solitude.

This desire, however, does not appear to belong solely to that period ; for the Abbé St. Pierre says, that he remembered to have heard old Segrais remark, that

'receiving an independent and distinct impression. The inference seems necessarily to be, that the retina of these insects may receive, at the same time, some thousands of impressions without any confusion ; which is far more wonderful than the single impression made on the retina of our own species, and on those of other animals, who have two eyes with a retina for each.'—*Acad. Imp.*

most young people of both sexes had, at one time of their lives (generally about seventeen or eighteen years of age), an inclination to retire from the world. 'He maintained this to be a species of melancholy, and humorously called it the *small-pox of the mind*; because scarce one in a thousand escaped the attack. I myself,' continues he, 'had this distemper; but am not much marked with it.'

This appetite governed Wollaston, author of the celebrated work, entitled 'The Religion of Nature delineated.' Though an ardent admirer of Nature, Wollaston lived in London so strictly, that he was not absent from his own bed one night during a period of thirty years. He lived calmly, quietly, and remote from almost every species of altercation; confining himself to a few friends, and a certain routine of study; embracing the art of throwing off prejudices, and tracing the power and nature of causes and consequences. His delight in privacy, however, had two evil effects; it engendered a modesty and a timidity, which made him appear in company much less learned and scientific than he really was; and it gave men, far his inferiors, an opportunity of triumph, to which they were in no respect entitled. Secondly, it left him, in a great measure, alone during the latter part of his life; and he was doomed to feel the consequences of having neglected the wisdom of cultivating the acquaintance of men younger than himself. His death, however, was calm, resigned, and composed. His 'Religion of Nature delineated' is a fine work; but the activity of science will soon cause it to be alluded to more often than read.

## VI.

WHO ARE RELUCTANT TO KNOW THE CHARACTERS  
OF MEN.

BRUTUS and Trebonius seem not to have known the character of Anthony so well as Cassius.

‘BRUTUS. Alas, good Cassius, do not think of him ;

For he is given

To sports, to wildness, and much company.

TREBONIUS. There is no fear in him ; let him not die ;

For he will live, and laugh at this hereafter.’

Brutus imagined, that as Anthony was given to wildness and company, he could have little desire to become a politician ; and Trebonius seems to have thought so too. Brutus was one of those, who learn men late, and political prudence never. The Duke of Marlborough, too, was, in some degree, allied to this order. ‘The Duke of Shrewsbury has it in his power,’ wrote his Grace to the duchess, ‘to do a great deal of hurt ; but ‘I am of the humour not to believe the hundredth part ‘of what is said of any body ; so that I may be easily ‘imposed upon.’

Anthony, first Earl of Shrewsbury, used to keep notes of whatever he learnt from others, in a book, alphabetically arranged ; in consequence of which he acquired, after some years’ trial, the most perfect knowledge of character of any man of his time, abroad or at home. Some, on the other hand, are exceedingly reluctant to know the characters of men ; and I was one of this number once myself. I became acquainted with mankind late. All was foreground ; there was no perspec-

tive. Till the age of five-and-thirty I would not see. I shut my eyes willingly ; nay, zealously. I was ashamed of what I heard, and alarmed at what I read. Circumstances, at length, compelled me to remove the shade from before my eyes. I drew the veil, summoned resolution, looked forward, backward, and on each side, and these pages are the results of the experience I have acquired. I am now five-and-fifty, and could wish, in some respects, to return to my former ignorance.

‘ Taught by melancholy proof,  
I, from the blind and faithless world aloof,  
(Nor fear its envy, nor desire its praise,)  
Would choose my path through solitary ways.’

*Michael Angelo—Duppa.*


Some years ago, I say, I cared but little to inquire into the characters of men or of women. I could hear little good of any one ; but evil, as much as would satisfy a man of moderation for breakfast, dinner, tea, supper, and dreams. The catalogue of follies, vices, and even crimes, indeed, seemed amply abundant for a folio, printed small, divided into chapters and sections, with notes, sub-notes, commentaries, and illustrations of a thousand pages ; virtues were dwarfs ; vices and crimes giants.

When I became a man, and enjoyed the satisfaction of having a house, servants, and horses of my own, I made two laws ;—first, to allow no idle tittle-tattle ; secondly, in humble imitation of Cato the elder, I would permit the name of no one, who had injured me, in word or in deed, to be mentioned, unless in cases of absolute necessity.



The principle of all this was good ; but practice is better than precept. I found by this, that I lost no small share of indispensably necessary information. I then resolved to hear as well as to see. Armed with this resolution, I gradually acquired the art of listening, not only to good but to evil, with some degree of patience ; and having at last discovered, that in wise men there is some folly, and in bad men some virtue, I listened and heard with no small share of philosophy. I have lived in villages, in small towns, and in large cities. I have lived in a country almost as barren as Arabia Petræa ; I have lived in scenes worthy the pencil of a Claude, or the pen of a Radcliffe ; and what knowledge have I gained ?—that, if we would *fully* appreciate the beauties of a fine country, or *fully* console ourselves for the deformity of a barren one, we must know the intimate history of few or none of its inhabitants.

When persons are favourites with us, we are apt to make out their characters just as we wish. We are afterwards, perhaps, made ten years older in experience by a word or a look. Our eyes are opened in a manner we could never have conceived ; yet, in youth, what parent would be willing that his child should part early with so amiable, though so delusive, a propensity ? Is it not one of the best buds of youth ?



## VII.

## WHOSE EYES ARE OPENED AGAINST THEIR WILL.

COUNT STRUENSEE confessed to Dr. Munter, that his unbelief and aversion to religion arose out of a superficial knowledge of religion on one side, and, on the other, a great disinclination to obey its precepts; with a readiness to entertain every objection which could be discovered against it.

It is certain that knowledge lessens the purity of innocence in some, and corrupts the sources of action. In others it is directly the reverse. The more they know, the wiser they appreciate; the better they act.

Many men's eyes, ears, and understandings, are opened much against their wills. They cannot dream at forty, or even at five-and-thirty, as they were wont to dream. They cannot hope as they hoped formerly; their very wishes undergo a revolution; and if misfortunes have overtaken them, the hopes and the wishes have greater reference to the past than to the future. Experience has pulled the film from their eyes, and anointed them, as it were, with 'euphrasie and rue.'

Alphonso!—thou art young, innocent, and inexperienced. I would that I could exchange my practice and experience for your innocence; but if the world must remain as it is, I would not exchange my comparative age even for the brilliancy of your comparative youth.

'I am tired of waiting for the chemic gold,  
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old.'

*Dryden.*

Hughes, when only twenty-four, wrote an essay 'On the pleasure of being deceived;' which is, though forgotten, really worth reading. But if you would know, my friend, the instability of all things from reading, rather than from experience, consult the tablet of Cebes, and the dialogue, 'De tranquillitate animi,' by Florentius Volusenus. My eyes have been opened much against my will; though I cannot, thank Heaven! bear evidence to the assertion of Camoëns:

'What is there left in this vain world to crave,  
To love, to see, more than I yet have seen?  
Still wearying cares, disgusts, and coldness, spleen,  
Hate and despair, and Death, whose banners wave  
Alike o'er all.'

*Camoëns, sonnet xcii. Roscoe.*

In the midst of this,—if indeed the picture is allowed to be faithful,—it cannot be denied, that belief, even of error, is, in a variety of instances, one of the chief enjoyments, of which the human heart is richly susceptible.

#### VIII.

##### WHO HAVE A CONTEMPT FOR MANKIND.

SOME writers have indulged in passages more than justly expressive of their contempt for mankind. Thus, Horace,

——— 'Audax omnia perpeti  
Gens humana ruit per vetitum et nefas.'

Indeed, so great was the depravity in the times of Augustus, that Horace seems to have thought that he, who had many vices and no crimes, was safe.

‘ Si vitiis mediocribus, et mea paucis  
 Mendosa est natura, alioqui recta, velut si  
 Egregio inspersos reprehendas corpore nævos.’

Lib. i., sat. vi.

Juvenal had even a worse opinion of the age in which he lived, than Horace had of his. Mark what he says of good men,—

‘ Rari quippe boni; numero vix sunt totidem, quot  
 Thebarum portæ vel divitis ostia Nili.’

We are informed by Belloni, that Rubens composed a manuscript, descriptive of the actions and passions of men, as exhibited by the poets and embodied by the painters. This work who would not desire to see? No intermediate gradations appear to exist between man and animals resembling man, as the monkey, the baboon, the ape, and the ourang outang. We must suppose the link, therefore, to be sustained by the lowest order of intellect in man, and the highest in *Simia*\*; an image which, as it is most resembling man, is to him the most disgusting and deformed.

Man, too, seems thus, sometimes, even to himself. For so differently is he constructed in respect to the government of his reason and passions, that Erasmus declared he was either a god or a wolf; while some ancient theorist, whose name I do not remember, supposed Nature to have made him entirely out of wantonness. Thus, while one class endeavour to debase their species by showing the miseries of man; another endeavours to delude him by exaggerating his greatness.

\* ‘ *Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia nobis.*’—*Ennius*.

This arises, in some degree, from our being unable to do by men what Alexander did for Aristotle, to enable him to write a history of animals; viz.—summon several thousand hunters, fowlers, and fishermen, to give information relative to the instincts, habits, manners, and capacities of quadrupeds, birds, fishes, reptiles, and insects.

Some, in order to depreciate man the more, even assert of him, that he is the only animal that preys upon its kind. Yet no one, I think, will seriously assert this, who has traversed the forest, toiled through the desert, or sailed over the seas. Horace, however, gave into the absurdity.

‘*Neque hic lupis mos, nec fuit leonibus, &c.*’

*Epod. vii.*

Juvenal extends this even to serpents.

‘*Sed jam serpentum major concordia, &c.*’

*Sat. xv., v. 159.*

In another place he exclaims,

‘*Quando* .

*Indica tigris agit rabida cum tigride pacem  
Perpetuam; sevis inter se convenit ursis.*’

*Sat. xv., 163.*

And yet, where, in all the vast regions of the earth, was this picture ever exhibited; except among fabulists in prose and verse?

To have a bad opinion, in regard to mankind in general, is a pestilence! I would scarcely think as Guicciardini thought for half the universe. ‘Pope Clement was a good pope,’ said he; ‘but, by this I do not

‘allude to goodness apostolical; for in the days I speak of, that pope was esteemed good, who did not, in wickedness, exceed the worst of men.’

The longer I live, the better opinion I have of mankind; and the wider I cast my vision, the more distinctly do I perceive, that those, who have a contempt for others, have the most exalted (need I say fallacious?) opinion of themselves.

## IX.

WHO BEGIN IN DISTRUST, AND FINISH IN CONFIDENCE.

MACHIAVEL has a most detestable maxim;—slay your enemy, or caress him\*. Such artifice† is, however, nothing more than the presumed strength of incapable men; for it is the surest way to be ourselves deceived‡, to fancy ourselves more cunning than all the rest of the world.

Some men begin the world in distrust, and finish in confidence; others begin in confidence, and finish in distrust. These opposite results arise from the persons with whom the two parties have been fated to contend, to mingle with and to live with. The former has fallen among Samaritans, as it were; the latter among Jews.

One day, Marie Antoinette told Madame Campan

\* Strozza l' inimico, o accarezzato.

† L'usage fréquent de finesses est toujours l'effet d'une grande incapacité, et la marque d'un petit esprit.

‡ Le vrai moyen d'être trompé, c'est de se croire plus fin que les autres.

that Dumourier had declared to her that he had drawn the *bonnet rouge* over his head ; but that he neither was, nor could be, a Jacobin ; and that, while speaking, he seized her hand, and saluted it with transport ; exclaiming, ‘ Suffer yourself to be saved !’ Her majesty trusted him when he would have made no point of deceiving her, and distrusted him at a time when, of all others in his life, perhaps, he was most to be trusted.

The error of Marie Antoinette, in respect to Dumourier, was precisely the one into which Necker fell in regard to Mirabeau. Mirabeau proposed that the Duke of Orleans should be lieutenant-general of France ; but he abandoned the idea immediately upon being closely admitted to a knowledge of the duke’s imbecility. Mirabeau said to M. Malouet, ‘ I wished to have some conversation with you ; because, through all your moderation, I perceive that you are a friend to liberty. I am, perhaps, more afraid of the fermentation I see in men’s minds than you are. I am not capable of basely selling myself to the cause of despotism ; I wish for a free constitution, but of a monarchical form. I have no desire to shake the monarchy ; but I perceive so many wrong-headed persons in our assembly, such inexperience, such exultation, so acrimonious and inconsiderate an obstinacy, in the two first orders, that I dread some horrible commotion as much as you can. You are connected with Monsieur Necker and Monsieur de Montmorin ; you ought to know what their intentions are. If they have formed a plan ; and if that plan is reasonable ; I am willing to support it.’

In consequence of this conversation, an interview took

place between Necker and Mirabeau. Necker admired his genius and his eloquence, but he refused to have any thing to do with a man whose private character had made him conspicuously notorious.

That the death of Mirabeau was a great national misfortune, notwithstanding the odium which attached to his name in private, can be questioned by no one duly informed of the then existing spirit of parties. In him the king might have enjoyed a servant; the violent aristocrats a balance; the democrats a muffle; the limited monarchists a shield, a sword, and a truncheon; Marat would have died, perhaps, in exile; and Robespierre, Roland, and Louis XVI., calmly in their beds.

## X.

WHO ARE SUPPOSED TO BE KNOWN BY EPITHETS APPLIED TO THEM.

‘ On each hand

Historic urns, and breathing statues rise,  
And speaking busts.’—*Ruins of Rome.*

MANY of these speaking busts (if rigidly examined) would fall from their pedestals; and those of others, which lie unnoticed and unknown, rise in their stead. ‘ I remember,’ says Lord Bolingbroke, ‘ to have seen ‘ a procession at Aix-la-Chapelle, wherein an image of ‘ Charlemagne is carried on the shoulders of a man, ‘ who is hid by the long robe of the imperial saint. ‘ Follow him into the vestry, you see the bearer slip from ‘ under the robe, and the gigantic figure dwindles into an ‘ image of the ordinary size, and is set amongst other



‘lumber\*.’ Such would be the fate of those to whom I allude; too many of whom we, in our ignorance and facility, denominate illustrious: that is, illustrious in bad actions.

Can men be known by the epithets bestowed upon them? The trivial name of *Thistle* prevents the milk-thistle from being esteemed one of the greatest ornaments of the garden. The Fiddle-wood† is held in contempt, merely because persons, for the most part, are ignorant that its appellation is a corruption of *Fidello*, and so called from its faithfulness and durability. The *Ailanthus* is called the ‘Tree of Heaven’ from its height; but the cedar of Libanus has the epithet of ‘lofty;’ not because it is a tall tree, but because it grows in elevated regions. The plant *Ambrosia* has nothing agreeable about it; it has even the taste of wormwood; and the *Leopard’s-bane*, as well as the *Enchanter’s Nightshade*, have poisonous qualities attached to them which do not exist. In these instances we may read examples as to the little dependence there is to be placed in epithets.

Princes, however, may sometimes thus be estimated; that of *great*, for instance, is seldom applied to good princes; being an epithet usually fastened on the foreheads of those remarkable only for great military achievements. When Alexander the Great found that he could not conquer the Scythians, he called them barbarians whenever he spoke of them. Two thousand

\* Letters to and from Swift, let. 45.

† Citharexylum Melano-cardium.

years after, a conqueror (Napoleon), finding himself in a similar predicament under another Alexander, gave them the same title. When, however, the Russian senate, on Alexander's return from Paris, desired to confer on him the title of the Blessed, the emperor answered, 'I wish the people to bless me in their hearts; as I 'bless them from the depth of mine\*.'

Rome had two titles; one of which it deserved; the other not. 'Urbs urbium,' 'Parens omnium gentium.' Sylla was called 'Felix;' and Sylla styled Pompey 'Magnus.' Octavius, also, was first called 'Augustus' by the greatest traitor and sycophant of his age; but the name he was most to be flattered by was 'Romulus†.'

Nero was a name denoting fortitude and every nobler virtue: now, it is associated with inordinate cruelty. Constantine called Trajan 'The Wall-flower,' because there were so many inscriptions in honour of him. Commodus styled himself 'Augustus,' 'Pius,' 'Felix,' 'Maximus,' 'Invictus,' and 'Pacator orbis terrarum.' He was designated 'Commodus,' says Vopiscus‡; but he was, in reality, *semper incommodus*. Alexander, according to Lampridius §, was called 'Severus' for his severity; but Tertullian ascribes that title to his constancy of mind. Claudius II. was styled 'Augustus' for his moderation, 'Titus' for his virtue, 'Trajan'

\* Oginski's Mémoires sur la Pologne et Polonais, t. ii. p. 141.

† Dion Cassius, xliii.

‡ In Vit. Taciti Imp., c. vi.

§ Cap. xii.

for his valour, and 'Antoninus' for his piety. As to Probus, he was 'Probus vere probum.'

Vopiscus says of Aurelian that he was *necessary* rather than good. Childebert was called, also, the 'Useful Prince;' but the most useful of European kings must, perhaps, yield in point of interest, to the Arabian caliphs; whose buildings to accommodate travellers, wells, watering-places, temples, caves for snow, infirmaries, observatories, public schools, colleges, and academies, furnish such triumphant subjects to the admiring pens of Bohadin and other writers on Arabian dynasties.

In respect to epithets bestowed upon the kings of France, Theodimir is called 'Romulus,' and Pharamond 'Numa.' The Italians styled Louis *débonnaire* the 'Pious;' Pope Innocent VIII. called Louis XI. (one of the worst of men) 'a wise and pious king\*.' Louis XII. is almost the only prince called by a nation (though far from being the only one so styled by historians), 'Père du Peuple.' Louis XIV. was named 'Dieu-Donné' at his birth, and 'Grand' after his coronation. Louis XV. was first called 'Bien-aimé' by a person named Vadé, who invented the title, and almanacs echoed the cheat. De Lille wished to append the epithet, 'the Desired,' to the title of Louis XVIII., but it scarcely survived the year in which it was given.

Lorenzo de' Medici acquired the title of 'magnificent' early in life. Sismondi† insists, that he enjoyed that distinction in common with other princes who had

\* Politiano. Ep. Lib. viii., ep. v.

† Vit. Laurent. iv. 6.

no other title; but from certain passages in Fabroni\* and Pignotti†, it appears certain that the appellation was given him on account of the magnanimity and magnificence of his general conduct. The noblest title ever conferred upon a sovereign, however, was that given by way of ridicule by his nobles to Casimir the Great; ‘Rex Rusticorum.’

Ferdinand of Castile gained the distinguished title of ‘Catholic,’ for having introduced the Inquisition into Spain. In that country‡ he was called ‘wise and prudent;’ in Italy ‘the Pious;’ and, in many respects, he was a great sovereign; but his ingratitude to Columbus, his seizures of Navarre and Naples, and his conduct in the unprincipled league of Cambray, can never be forgiven. Who would not gladly exchange his title of ‘Catholic’ for that, which distinguished Emanuel King of Portugal, whom history celebrates so agreeably for having ‘banished poverty and distress from his ‘kingdom?’

Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, was so agreeable to the people of the Low Countries, that they gave her the glorious title of ‘the Queen of Hearts.’ In regard to British sovereigns, they are, in no way, to be known by the epithets appended to them. The most celebrated § was one of the worst; the most amply appreciated ||, one of the most insolent and arbitrary.

\* Storia della Toscana, tom. vi., p. 263.

† Roscoe. *Illust. Crit. and Hist.*, p. 91—3.

‡ Volt. *Essai sur les Mœurs*, c. xiv.

§ Richard I. || Elizabeth.

## XI.

## WHO SPIN TOO FINELY.

THOSE who draw nice distinctions are generally persons valuable to know. Their sense is delicate; but there are others, and in some measure allied to them, who are not so agreeable to a reflecting mind. 'I asked Burns,' says Mr. Ramsay, 'whether the Edinburgh literati had mended his poems by their criticisms.' 'Sir,' answered he, 'those gentlemen remind me of some spinsters in my country, who spin their thread so fine, that it is neither fit for weft nor woof.'

Many men weave arguments, as spiders weave their 'mathematical webs,' all one way; with little attention either to times or circumstances.

## XII.

## WHO ADOPT TOO HIGH A STANDARD.

I HAVE never seen any of the productions of Subtermans of Antwerp; but Lanzi assures us that he possessed the peculiar talent of ennobling every countenance, without injuring the likeness. Some persons have the same talent in respect to all they contemplate. Rousseau, for instance, would dignify a weed; and Raffaëlle render beautiful even the finger of a beggar.

Thus is it to look on the bright side of things; and thence I have always been induced to admire the character of the Count de Desaleurs. 'From the kiosque in my garden,' said he, in a letter to Madame du

Deffand, when ambassador to the Ottoman court, 'I enjoy a view which the greatest sovereigns might envy me. There I devote a great deal of time to reflection; but I always endeavour to seize the bright side of every thing; since I have always thought it the acmé of wisdom to be happy in any place and in any situation.'

We may, however, adopt too high a standard in respect to character, and of this Racine has set the example; and the remark may be applied to Metastasio in his characters of Cleonice and Annius, in his dramas of 'Demetrius' and 'La Clemenza di Tito.' Truly great minds, however, are perpetually forming high characters of things. They are little in nothing. With them great objects engender greater ideas. When Michael Angelo left Florence, in order to build the dome of St. Peter's, he turned his horse to take a last view of the beautiful church of Santa Maria, and exclaimed, 'Come te non voglio! meglio di te non posso.' He, nevertheless, built one much superior.

Some characters have all their ideas enlarged to the utmost extent of exaggeration. All nature is in caricature: hence in their proportions we recognize neither dignity nor elegance nor propriety; like those painters who, by adopting sombre hues, derange the due balance and participation of light and shade; and this generalizers frequently do by endeavouring to bend every subject to a system, rather than making them subject to the faithful generalizations of truth.

Franklin asserted that mind will, one day, become omnipotent over matter. This assertion has been twisted into all manner of meanings; but the saying

was made only in reference to machines and co-operations of labour.

Bacon and Condorcet imagined the possibility of a longer duration of life, arising from the increasing improvement of art. Starting from this point, a philosopher of the present day \* anticipates a period, when men will reach an almost unlimited age, through the medium of an improved intellect; when there will be neither disease nor pain, melancholy nor resentment; when the whole of society will consist of real men and not of actual children; when men will cease to propagate; when the absence of crime will render government a matter of history; such being no longer necessary, and therefore none in existence in any part of the globe.

A friend has made a fine remark,—‘ every successful student in mental philosophy is only, as it were, one of a series of labourers in the vineyard of mind; all knowledge is silently unfolding an universal science; no one can, therefore, declare the limits of the human mind.†’ In this I agree.

### XIII.

#### LOOKERS-ON.

‘ I HAVE no wife, nor children, good or bad, to provide for; I am a spectator of other men’s fortunes and adventures, and how they play their parts, which, methinks, are diversely presented unto me as from a common theatre or scene.’ Thus writes Burton, the eccen-

\* Godwin. Political Justice, vol. ii., p. 520, 528.

† Clissold’s Hints for the Development of the Mind, p. 57.

tric author of the 'Anatomie of Melancholy;' as a Greek writer had written before him.

This passage seems very fine; it even carries an air of philosophy with it: but the man who has never married, who has never had children, who is a mere spectator, who sits calmly and idly as if lounging at a theatre, may be very shrewd and very intelligent, as far as sights go; he may know a multitude of anecdotes, and be capable of making many curious observations;—but, unless he has been previously an actor in the scene, he can have little knowledge of the temptations with which men, who find themselves compelled to perform parts in the drama of life, are so fatally assailed. He stands like a dismantled fortress;—more to be admired in perspective than feared by enemies on a near approach, or depended upon by friends.

We know nothing of the scent of a flower even from a fac-simile of Vanhuysen; and little or nothing of character even from the best sculpt of Michael Angelo. We may think much, yet we can know but little; unless we see with our own eyes, hear with our own ears, and suffer with our own nerves. We must frequently have hoped, and have been disappointed; frequently have trusted and been betrayed;—for never to hope luxuriantly, and never to trust unwisely, are the fortunate privileges of none.

Some French writer has said, that a knowledge of electricity has placed mankind upon an equality with the gods of antiquity; but Septimius Severus had arrived at a still higher height of observation, when he complained that he had seen all things, and found all things to be of little or no value. He had, probably,



never read Solomon; but his own experience taught him that all was vanity! Chesterfield acknowledges the same result\*. Cowper, too,

‘ I sum up half mankind,  
And add two-thirds to the remaining half,  
And find the total of their hopes and fears  
Dreams,—empty dreams!’

All is vanity; yet nothing exists in vain.

This one truth, thoroughly engraven on the memory and the heart, is worth a thousand articles in the mere catalogue of human opinions. For my own part, I find the world to be right as often as I find it to be wrong; and almost as often wrong as I find it to be right. The cause of this seems to arise out of the circumstance, that men examine subjects only in parts. They will not stop till they are in possession of facts; nor will they wait till they have heard the whole of either a circumstance or an argument. They fix their eyes upon the prominent parts of the picture, and cannot take them off. As they judge, therefore, from *ex-parte* statements, they must, of necessity, often be in the wrong; but when they are thoroughly acquainted with the whole, such is my respect for the common sense of mankind, that I believe their judgments to be right ninety-six times out of a hundred.

We spend many years in acquiring the capacity of judging what is really beautiful and what is intrinsically

\* ‘ I have been as wicked and as vain,’ said he, ‘ though not so wise, as Solomon; but I am, at least, wise enough to feel that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. This truth is never sufficiently discovered or felt by mere speculation; experience is necessary for conviction; though, perhaps, at the expense of some morality.’

excellent. We live in our fathers' houses ; but it is only after many trials that we recognise the ease, comfort, and freedom from danger and injury, we there enjoyed ; free from impertinence, ignorance, impudence, and imbecility. We enter the world, and what, in the name of Heaven, do we see ? But mere spectators can seldom see more than the outsides either of men or of things ; their account is closed when they presume to judge interiors ; they indulge their humour or their spleen, and dispense their praise and their censure as best accords with their interests, wishes, passions, or capacities ; forgetting that as every plant upon the earth serves as a region, as a house, and as food, for myriads of insects invisible to the naked eye ; so virtues and vices, services and disservices, honour and dishonour, power and weakness, wisdom and folly, belong to every one under the canopy of heaven ; differing only in degree, and those differences arising perhaps from circumstances, partially unknown to the parties themselves, and still more remote from the reach or the vision of those, who presume to sit in judgment upon them.

De Witt used to assert, that it should be a perpetual maxim with him, to let no one be master of his time or repose. This, however, is very different from the conduct of those lookers-on, who are fully sensible to their own desires and feelings, and yet calm and indifferent to the desires and agonies of others.

Lookers-on, in times of great public disaster, ought to be the first to be compelled to leave a city : because, as they feel only for themselves, they cannot be trusted by any ; since they throw away the implements of honest

assistance, as if they were glad to get rid of them. Indifferent to the game, they seem to say,

‘ Your rivals having made a push,  
And kick’d you out without remorse,  
Whether it signifies a rush,  
Is the next part of this discourse.

‘ You think yourselves abused and put on !  
’Tis natural to make a fuss ;  
To see it and not care a button,  
Is just as natural to us.

‘ Like people, viewing at a distance  
Two persons thrown out of a casement,  
All we can do for your assistance  
Is to afford you our amazement.’

This may be all very fine in matters of little moment ; but in affairs in which the peace and happiness of thousands are involved, indifference ought to be punished as well as excess.

There are some societies which may be distinguished by the appellation of *citizen spectators* ; and of these may be classed the inhabitants of Geneva. ‘ It is very ‘ remarkable,’ says D’Alembert, ‘ that a city, which ‘ contains scarce 24,000 inhabitants, and whose scattered territory consists not of thirty villages, should ‘ be a sovereign state, and one of the most flourishing cities of Europe, enriched by her liberty and ‘ her commerce. She frequently beholds every thing ‘ around her in flames, without having any share in the ‘ calamity. The events which disturb the rest of Europe ‘ afford her only an amusing spectacle, which she ob- ‘ serves without taking any share in the calamity. She

‘pronounces with impartiality upon the justice of the contests between other nations; and judges all the sovereigns of Europe without flattering, injuring, or fearing them.’ As far as external relations are concerned, perhaps, this is the happiest state in which a republic, a sovereignty, or an empire can be placed.

## XIV.

## WHO ARE BEST DESCRIBED BY NEGATIVES.

NEGATIVE qualities seldom command admiration in men; and yet some descriptions, in which negatives are employed, delight as much in those qualities as in positive ones. We may evidence a passage in Fletcher’s ‘Shepherdess \*.’

Some persons can only be described by negatives. The father of George III., for instance. Many had asserted of him that he was a man of excellent talents, and possessed a thorough knowledge of the British constitution. ‘No assertions,’ says a writer of anecdotes, relative to Lord Chatham, ‘can be more distant from the truth. The best of his qualifications might be negatively described. His heart was not bad; nor was he an enemy to the kingdom: he amassed no private treasures; nor adopted any sinister advice with a view to obtain them. He was not insane; nor was he under the private tuition of the princess.’

\* ——— ‘Here shalt thou rest.

Upon this holy bank, no deadly snake

Upon this turf, &c.’

In Collins, also:—

‘Nor ever vernal bee was heard to murmur there.’

Some men's creeds, also, are known by negatives better than by affirmatives; and this may even be said of Wickcliffe. He rejected the worship of images, relics, and the Virgin: he rejected auricular confession; he rejected the right of the pope to excommunicate; he rejected transubstantiation; he disbelieved in purgatory; he disallowed celibacy; and he rejected the adoration of the host and the sacrifice of the mass.


## XV.

## WHO GO ABROAD AND SEE NOTHING.

THE Italians are so little given to travel, that a German critic, who had visited the glaciers of Bosson, the lake of Geneva, and the cascade of Arpinas, says, that the names of those places are more astonishing in the poems of an Italian than they would be in that of a North American.

It is well known that many men are as proud of ignorance as others are of knowledge; and more so. Peter the Great had to contend with great difficulties in the ignorance of his nobility:—he, therefore, directed them to travel. But one of them shut himself up in a house at Venice, that he might have the satisfaction of saying, on his return to Moscow, that he had neither seen, heard, nor learnt, a single thing during his travels. He was not actuated even by the desire which is so common to the young; and which is so well alluded to in ‘Cymbeline:’—

————— ‘What should we speak of,  
When we are old as you? when we shall hear



The rain and wind beat dark December ? How,  
 In this our pinching care, shall we discourse  
 The freezing hours away ? We have seen nothing.\*

Men of this sort remind me of Sir John Germain, who is said to have left a legacy to Sir Matthew Decker, because he regarded him as the author of St. Matthew's Gospel.

In science it is not only proper to observe, but to note, in reference to theory. Science then makes advances to philosophy. Where no theory is to be confirmed or dislocated, observations are notations for the future use of others.

## XVI.

WHO ARE ON A LEVEL WITH THEIR ART AND AGE.

RAPHAEL was on a level only with the apex of his art. Leonardo da Vinci was beyond this ; for he anticipated many discoveries in natural philosophy.

Tacitus says of Poppæus Sabinus, that he rose from a middle rank to imperial friendships, and was selected to govern the most important provinces, because he was ' equal to the task, and not beyond it\*.'

Wellington succeeds ill as a minister, because he is behind his age. Washington succeeded, because he was above neither his age nor his associates. Bolivar failed because he was superior to both.

Wellington depreciates what he knows not ; Bolivar overvalued that which he knew ; Washington cast an

\* Quod par negotiis, neque supra erat.—Annal. vi.


equal eye on that which was above, and that which was below. Bolivar scorned the greatness which courted him; Washington regarded height and equality with magnanimous indifference; Wellington wishes for power as a statesman; but can only compass the glory of being 'the first captain' of his age: and since he fought against rapacity, vulgarity, and despotism, that is glory enough.

## XVII.

## WHO MARCH BEFORE THE PUBLIC MIND.

ARE men to halt in their opinions till the boys come up? Some men affect, as it were, to resemble the lion; an animal that can see better by night than by day: others to assimilate with the rein-deer, which has an opening in the skin that covers its eyes, through which it can see when prevented opening them by the dazzling of the snow. 'If a sage descended from heaven,' says Helvetius, 'and in his conduct consulted only the light of reason, he would, universally, pass for a fool. He would be, as Socrates says, like a physician, whom the pastry-cooks accused before a tribunal, composed of children, for having prohibited the eating of pies and tarts, and would certainly be condemned.' This passage will not appear absurd, when we reflect that a famine was once believed in Russia to be caused by women; and that many were murdered on the presumption that they infused sterility into the earth, and prevented the labours of the bees.

It is great and glorious to march before the public mind either in science, in politics, or in legislation: but



it is a thousand chances to one, if the world will pardon him who has such foresight. Count Fransktein entered the best inn at the town of Basle, and joined in a conversation which took place at the table d'hôte; but he soon found how dangerous it is to act or even to think above the capacities of a company. He desisted; sat off for Berne the same day; praying that the king of Prussia might, ere long, descend to the tomb of the Capulets.

‘Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land?

All fear, none aid you, and few understand.’\*

An Armenian chief at Damascus seems to have understood this well. ‘You should send your son to Europe,’ said M. La Martine, ‘and give him that education you regret the want of yourself.’ ‘Alas!’ answered the Armenian, ‘what service should I render to my son if I were to raise him, by his knowledge, above the age and the country in which he is destined to live? What would he do at Damascus on returning hither with the information, the manners and the taste for liberty, he has acquired in Europe? If one must be a slave, it is better never to have known anything but slavery.’ ‘Woe to the men,’ says La Martine, ‘who precede their times! Their times crush them.’

Dryden says—

‘They who have best succeeded on the stage,  
Have still conformed their genius to their age.’

Rochefoucault says, the height of ability consists in a thorough knowledge of the real value of things, and the

\* Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. iv. p. 265.



genius of the age we live in. To which his commentator adds, 'Most of the authors, immortalized by their contemporaries, have been indebted to this knowledge, or else to the luck of living in an age with whose turn their abilities coincided.' To succeed largely in great attempts it is necessary to ground exertion on the impulse already given to society. To give the impulse, and to urge it into action, show the chief power.


## XVIII.

WHO ARE SUPPOSED TO BE KNOWN BY THEIR PRAYERS,  
CASUAL SPEECHES, &c.

WE may know men, occasionally, by their prayers; and we may instance Edwards the naturalist. He prayed that he might, in after life, become an intelligent being, 'void of gross matter; endowed with a voluntary motive-power, either to pierce infinitely into boundless ethereal space, or into solid bodies; to see and know how the parts of the universe are connected with each other; and by what amazing mechanism they are put and kept in regular and perpetual order.' This prayer was in strict conformity with the character of Mr. Edwards. I have never yet dared to pray for this; though, I confess, it is an immortality best suited to my wishes.

When we regret the defection of Pulteney and the pliability of Chesterfield, is it possible to forbear smiling at Pope's panegyric upon both?—

'How can I Pulteney, Chesterfield, forget;  
While Roman spirit charms and Attic wit?'



We may, however, sometimes judge of men by their conversation ; for a great deal may be gathered not only from their sentiments, but from the manner in which they deliver them. This is applicable more to the middle-aged and the old, than to the young. The young have lived but a short time ; they have erred, comparatively, only in trifles ; have never, perhaps, been essentially wronged or materially deceived ; and have, therefore, little knowledge of human affairs. They, but too often, however, fancy they know a great deal. For my own part, I confess that I thought I knew, at one-and-twenty, more than I find I know at fifty-five !

That men may *sometimes* be judged of by their *casual* speeches is very certain. A casual speech of the Prince de Conti, for instance, lets us entirely into his character. ‘ Oliver Cromwell,’ said he, ‘ was a great man ; but his son Richard is a wretch, who knew not how to enjoy the fruit of his father’s crimes.’ From this we learn, that, had the Prince de Conti’s father usurped the government of France, he would himself have been base enough to continue the usurpation.

## XIX.

## WHO LOVE JUSTICE, AND YET HAVE NO JUDGMENT.

CLARENDON affords us an instance in the person of Robert, third Earl of Essex. ‘ He was a great lover of justice,’ says he ; ‘ and could not have been tempted to consent to the oppression of an innocent man ; but, in discerning the several species of guilt, he had no faculties or measures of judging ; nor was above the

‘temptation of general prejudice : and it may be, of particular obligations and resentments, which proceeded from the weakness of his judgment ; ’not the malice of his nature.’

Lord Byron loves justice ; but he has little judgment in respect to it. He is unjust even to himself, and, therefore, describes himself as bearing a similitude to the beings his imagination has created. Shall his prophecy in respect to Dante be realized in himself?

‘ ’Tis the doom  
Of spirits of my order to be rack’d  
In life, to wear their hearts out, and consume  
Their days in endless strife, and die alone.  
Then future thousands crowd around their tomb,  
And pilgrims come from climes where they have known  
The name of him—who now is but a name,  
And wasting homage o’er the sullen stone.’

## XX.

## NOSCE TEIPSUM.

‘ ’Twould almost seem, so strange the view,  
That truth itself can vary too ;  
For things that have been clearly proved,  
By time are altered, changed, and moved ;  
And maxims, which the sage hath sought  
To suffer for, are come to nought.  
Yet one remains, the favourite one  
Of fallen Athenæ’s sapient son,  
The truest e’er pronounced below,  
That mortal man can nothing know\*.’

\* Delta. Thus Milton :—

‘ The first and wisest of them all professed  
To know this only—that he nothing knew.’

Par. Reg. iv. 293. From Cicero, Acad. i. 4.

A diary should be kept of our affections and feelings, as well as of our hopes and disappointments, our actions and reactions. By this we might, after a time, become acquainted with our own natures.

There is a fragment of Menander, which most persons appear inclined to respect; by deriving all the benefit they can from its practice.

'Away with that famed maxim, *Know thyself!*  
'Tis not well put; *Know others*, to my thinking,  
Is a more apt and profitable maxim.'

And yet it cannot be denied, that the most valuable part of the education of every man of superior sense is derived from himself; and this puts me in mind of Lucian's sale of the philosophers. Note, my friend, the prices at which they were sold. Pythagoras brought 32*l.* 5*s.* 10*d.*; Diogenes twopence! Aristotle sold for 64*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.*; and Chrysippus 38*l.* 15*s.*; but Socrates for only 6*l.* 9*s.* 2*d.* As to Heraclitus, Aristippus, and Democritus, they were totally unsaleable. Nobody offered a farthing for them!


This sale reminds me of Conde—the great Conde! Having been observed to read Cardinal de Retz's Memoirs with great eagerness, one of his attendants presumed to express some surprise at his doing so; since the cardinal had not mentioned him very favourably: 'For that very reason,' returned the prince, 'I read him. De Retz acquaints me with many follies, of which none of my friends have thought proper to inform me.' *O si sic omnia!*

All men see objects through mediums peculiar to

themselves. All mediums, therefore, require peculiar regulations of government. Plato's object, in the *Erastæ*, is to convince us, that the study of philosophy leads to the knowledge of ourselves ; with the design of making our acquirements operate on the minds of other persons. His *first Alcibiades* teaches the necessity of knowing oneself, without which all the sciences are useless. The *second Alcibiades* shows, that, till we do know ourselves, we are ill-qualified for a profitable intercourse with mankind ; and that, till we have acquired so much of the knowledge of nature as to know the debt we owe, we are equally unqualified to address ourselves to the Creator. These works present no novelty, either of argument or of illustration, for the present age ; but we ought never to forget, that they laid the ground-work of no inconsiderable part of what we know.

*Know thyself!* How can we know ourselves, if we know not our faults and vices? How can we know ourselves, if we are equally ignorant of our virtues? To feel the value of our virtues is to be half-converted from our faults and vices.

*Know thyself!* This is indeed a comprehensive sentence. For it is not only to know our relative situation in society, our manners, our wants, our superfluities, our desires, and our capacities ; the force of our passions, our probable and real opportunities ; but our duties in their separate parts ; and what is, perhaps, still more difficult, our relative situation in the universe. The greatest volume, in fact, to every man, is the *volume of himself*.



## XXI.

## WHO DO NOT DO JUSTICE TO THEIR OWN POWERS.

SIR William Jones may strictly be ranked with illustrious men. 'I will only say,' said he, in a letter to Schultens, 'that if I had lived at Rome or Athens, I should have preferred the labours, studies, and dangers of their orators and illustrious citizens, connected as they were with banishment and even death, to the groves of the poets, or the gardens of the philosophers.' In spite of this, it can scarcely be denied, I think, that he was less qualified for the one than for the other. He had not sufficient pliancy of mind for the bar; nor had he sufficient energy of body for the arena of politics. He was superior to both;—he was even qualified to have been a legislator. Yet, if we except his attention to British and Hindoo law, it may be justly said, that he wasted his powers on inferior objects. His mind was equal to an enlarged study of the universe; and yet he permitted it to be chained down, for the most part, by an attachment to mere words, remote antiquities, and detached portions of natural history. As a man, he was beyond all praise: his chief fault seems to have been, the not doing justice to his own powers.

## XXII.

## WHO CAN BE JUDGED OF ONLY IN REFERENCE TO THEIR MISFORTUNES.

THE discoveries of Galileo were brilliant; those of Kepler profound, and the product of intense labour; yet he is more intimately known by his works than

Galileo. In fact, we know from them every secret of his heart. Montaigne is not more candid, nor Froissart more transparent. 'Well did I love to see,' says the latter, 'dances and carolling; well to hear the minstrelsy and tales of glee; well to attach myself to those who loved hounds and hawks; well to toy with my fair companions; and methought I had the art well to win their grace.' Kepler was of a more solid nature. In reading his works, we are surprised to be let into his weaknesses, errors, and secrets. He is always undressed as it were; he has no disguises; and he explains his mode of proceeding in respect to worldly cares, as he does in regard to the difficulty of his discoveries. His sagacity could only be equalled by his genius; and his genius can be estimated only by precise references to his misfortunes. He lives in the records of the firmament; and he lives, also, in the catalogue of those who, illustrious in their virtues and studies, have died of broken hearts!

### XXIII.

#### WHOSE ONE BAD QUALITY NEUTRALIZES THEIR VIRTUES.

SOME men, and even some women, though neither ill-humoured nor quarrelsome, are exceedingly difficult to live with;—they having one quality so irksome, that it counterbalances the advantages and beauties of all the rest. Were a woman a loud talker, for instance, it would, with me, be of little or no advantage, that she were as beautiful as Venus; as learned as Madame Dacier; as accomplished as Cleopatra; or even as fas-

cinating as the houris in Mahomet's paradise. And this reminds me of the character of Victorinus, as described by Julius Aterianus\*.

## XXIV.

## WHO ARE KNOWN BY THEIR MOTTOS.

SOME are agitated by a desire of inquiring into motives, causes, antecedents, and consequences; the *qui*, *quo*, and *quomodo*, as it were, of every fact, of every sentiment, and of every person. They do not even hesitate to judge men by their mottos; and we may certainly know something of Walsingham by this rule; since he is said to have seen every man, and none saw him—'*video et taceo*.'

Men in general, however, cannot be judged in this manner; though from mottos we may often judge of what they wish to appear, wish to be, wish to have, and what they affect most to admire.

Mottos are much affected by persons of a particular cast. But, as a French writer† truly remarks, it is much easier to invent fine mottos than to perform great

\* 'Victorino qui post Junium Posthumium Gallias rexit nemi-  
'nem existimo præferendum: non in virtute Trajanum; non Anto-  
'ninum in clementia; non in gravitate Nervam; non in gubernando  
'æserio Vespasianum; non in Censura totius vitæ ac severitate  
'militari Pertinacem vel Severum. Sed omnia hæc libido, et cupi-  
'ditas voluptatis mulierariæ sic perdidit, ut nemo audeat virtutes  
'ejus in literas mittere quem constat omnium judicio meruisse  
'puniri.'

† *Mémoires de Marlborough*, ii. 106.



actions ; and much easier to paint inscriptions on banners than to defend them.

For devices we may refer to Paul Jovius\*.

The Babylonians were greatly addicted to them ; hence, upon the tops of their canes and walking-sticks, were eagles, pomegranates, roses, lilies, or some other figure. Herodotus assures us† that to have a stick without a device was not only unusual but even unlawful.

#### XXV.

WHO SET ANOTHER MAN'S ONE ERROR AGAINST THE  
THOUSAND OF THEIR OWN.

‘ Do nothing equivocal in this matter,’ said Julius to me, yesterday, after I had been stating what I would do, in reference to a subject in which a person had not acted as I thought he ought to have done ; ‘ there is ‘ an order of men, who will set any unconscious error ‘ on our parts, even if it involve the mistake of three ‘ farthings, against their wilful ones, of two hundred, two ‘ thousand, or two millions.’

Catiline, for instance, accused Cethegus of having one day walked into the women’s apartment. How often he had done the same himself, he did not stop to confess ; nor did he stay to hear how great was the multitude of his other inordinate crimes and vices.

\* Vid. Dialogo delle Impresse militari e amorose.

† Clio, cxcv.

## XXVI.

## WHO CALL NAMES.

GEORGE the Third had a great dislike to making Lord Camden (after his return from Ireland) a Knight of the Garter ; and inquiring his name—‘ What, what ! ‘ John Jeffreys ! the first Knight of the Garter, I verily ‘ believe, that was ever called John Jeffreys !’ For this anecdote we are indebted to Wraxall’s Memoirs.

Things are the same, call them by what names we will. The reefs and sand-banks of the sea are no other than submarine hills and mountains ; and the rose, as our ardent friend Romeo learnedly assures us,

‘ By any other name would smell as sweet.’

We may have some idea of the frightful depravity of manners, during the reign of Louis XV., from a passage in Voltaire’s Philosophical Dictionary. ‘ The ‘ word adultery is never pronounced. We do not say, ‘ Madame la Duchesse lives in adultery with Monsieur ‘ le Chevalier ; Madame la Marquise has a criminal intimacy with Monsieur l’Abbé ; but we say, Monsieur ‘ l’Abbé is, this week, the lover of Madame la Marquise.’

Now let us see what kind of thing the Duke of Otranto dignified with the name of liberty. ‘ The ‘ war is at an end,’ wrote he to Collot d’Herbois ; ‘ if we ‘ know how to avail ourselves of this memorable victory. ‘ Let us be terrible, that we may not be in danger of ‘ becoming weak or cruel ; let us destroy in our wrath, ‘ and at one blow, all rebels, conspirators, and traitors ; ‘ to spare ourselves the anguish, the tedious misery, of

‘punishing them as kings. Let us execute justice as nature does; let us avenge ourselves as a people; let us strike like the thunderbolt, and annihilate the ashes of our foes, that they may not pollute the soil of liberty.’ It must be confessed that Monsieur Fouché was well worthy the times in which he was permitted to arrive at the honours of a dukedom.

The calling of names is always indicative of a weak, degenerate cause. Thus, when the Latitudinarians were held in abhorrence, even such men as Hales, Chillingworth, More, Cudworth, and Tillotson were styled Socinians, Deists, and even Atheists; and that not only by Roman Catholics, but by the more rigid of their own persuasion.

Some are greatly offended, however, with names and epithets, which are, in fact, titles of honour. The English, for instance, were exceedingly offended at Napoleon’s calling them ‘shopkeepers;’ how absurdly, may be learned from the explanation he afterwards gave. ‘I meant,’ said he to O’Meara, ‘that you were a nation of merchants; and that all your great riches and your grand resources arose from commerce. What else constitutes the riches of England?’ If it is a miserable thing to be ashamed of our trade, calling, or profession; it is still worse to be ashamed of our hopes, virtues, opportunities, and qualifications.

## XXVII.

WHO CONFINE THEMSELVES ONLY TO ONE PART OF  
THEIR SUBJECT.

‘ Most souls, ’tis true, but peep out once an age,  
Dull, sullen pris’ners of the body’s cage.  
Like eastern kings, a lazy state they keep,  
And, close confined to their own palace, sleep.’

*Pope—Elegy.*

MANY men take only that side of a personal question, in which there appears no defect; and this they call taking a just view: whereas half is concealed.

As seeds of plants, differing in number, size, figure, and character, resemble each other in no inconsiderable degree in their internal construction; so is it of the manners, habits, and, above all, the passions of mankind: though some act, think, and assert, as if there were no more resemblance between one man and another, than there exists between a mountain and a valley, and the letters of which those words are composed;—the anatomical structure constituting all the similitude.

Most persons confine their admiration to the flower; whereas the leaf, the stem, the branch, the cuticle, the root—indeed, every other portion of the vegetable structure, is almost equally worthy of attentive investigation. So is it of mankind; for as anatomy regards the structure of bodies, physiology their functions, and natural philosophy their capacities and relations; the

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metaphysician, unskilled in worldly wisdom, inquires, with some degree of asperity,—

‘ In what vile part of this anatomy  
Doth my soul lodge ?’

Who has not heard of the beauty, distinguishing the Antinous of the Belvidere ? Turn but a little to the right or to the left, and view it in profile ; you immediately discover that it loses no small share of its beauty and grace. Thus is it in courts. Had that of St. James’s remonstrated with firmness with that of Versailles, the French had never dared to invade Corsica ; had it but said three words in the way of constructive menace, in 1823, they had never presumed to enter Spain.

Cardinal Mazarin used to assert, that were even the most able men examined, as the ancients did sacrifices, something bad would be found in all of them. This was but a poor apology for his own crimes and indiscretions ; though it cannot be safely denied, that men of a clear discernment will often find occasion to believe that misconduct more frequently arises out of inconsiderate folly, than out of considerate baseness. Hence the danger of attributing to mankind in general what only belongs to one order in particular : an example following that of Machiavel too closely ; Machiavel having been too often guilty of deducing general arguments from particular facts.

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## XXVIII.

## WHO GIVE WRONG NAMES TO THINGS.

SOME men of the world are polished to such a degree that nothing natural is left to them ; all being surface, gilding, and syllabub.

Men of the world make as many worldly mistakes as nobly-minded men ; only they do not make the same sort of mistakes. They are ever giving wrong names to actions, too ; and wrong epithets to things ; mitigating, like the Athenians of old, bad actions, by giving them comparatively innocent appellations. Men they call clever, whom they ought to call knaves ; and certain women of rank they call ladies of fashion, when, in fact, they ought to call them no more and no less than strumpets.

Racine labours, and but too justly, under the charge of concealing what is hard, base, and low, under forms of politeness and courtesy ; and Pope, speaking of his own times, says (in a letter to Mr. Digby, 1724), ‘ Instead of four cardinal virtues, now reign four courtly ones. We have cunning for prudence ; rapine for justice ; time-serving for fortitude ; and luxuries for temperance.’ Just such is the case now. ‘ How does flattery deceive us,’ inquired Cassiodorus,—‘ by its misnomers?—Prodigality it calls liberality ; avarice, prudence ; debauchery, accomplishment ; obstinacy, constancy ; drunkenness, good companionship ; in fact,’ continues he, ‘ there is no vice that she does not cloak under the appearance of a virtue.’

Virtues and vices, indeed, seem to be named by persons who know neither; as the chamæpericlymenum was called the dwarf-honeysuckle by those who, seeing the fruit, had never seen the flower.

## XXIX.

WHO ARE SUPPOSED TO BE BEST KNOWN BY THEIR  
CONDUCT AT HOME.

‘MEN,’ said Napoleon, ‘are known by their conduct to their wives, children, and servants.’ Not so always. He was himself an instance to the contrary. There was a monarch, too, once reigning in Europe, who as a husband, father, and friend, was, I believe, inestimable: he was also a kind, indulgent, and faithful master. Yet he seemed to have been seldom more at his pleasure than when fettered with warlike engagements. Had he served mankind as faithfully as he served his passions; had he read Sallust’s letter to Cæsar with the same appetite that he devoured the details of a battle, in which his person was never at hazard; he had saved to his country and his successor many millions in money, and a multitude of sons and brothers, husbands and fathers.

## XXX.

## WHO AFFECT IMPARTIALITY.

SOME men affect impartiality for the purpose of condemning their adversaries with the greater certainty. These are the most insidious and most dangerous of enemies. Others turn all the injuries a man may have

received from persons as base-minded as themselves into accusations. These, however, become weary of their own calumnies, when they find they are no longer believed: and there are some blockheads who reproach others with their eminence, merely with the hope of persuading them they think nothing of their deserts.

‘ Madam! be still; with reverence may I say it,  
For every word you speak in his behalf,  
Is slander to his royal dignity.’—*Hen. VI.* act iii. sc. 2.

Men, I say, for the most part, measure others by their own standards. But in what manner are virtue and birth esteemed, unsupported by riches? In the same manner as farmers, for a long time, valued sea-weed. In fact, virtue would be totally banished even from the temples; were it not for the pleasure itself excites, impregnates, and enjoys. What, then, constitutes this valuable friend?—the disposition; the knowledge; the deliberation and preference; the pureness; and the immoveability of purpose.

Polybius lays it down as a rule, that, when a man has taken upon him the office of an historian, his affections are no longer his own, and his duty imperatively leads to the divestment of every passion. It had been well for the fame of Polybius, as well as of Livy, had they written in the spirit of this truly philosophical canon; but they have not. Neither have Tacitus, Guiccardini, Davila, Hume, or any other historian, that any one can mention.



## XXXI.

## WHOSE CHARACTERS ARE PREDICTED.

‘ The man, that, in the forehead of his fortune,  
Bears figures of renowne and miracle.’

*Marlowe—Tamberlaine.*

SOME youths show great signs of capacity and judgment; and, on this account, we augur well of their future fortunes. Deformaux asserts, that Cardinal de Richelieu, having conversed with the great Condé, then not more than twenty years of age, prophesied to M. de Chavigni, that he would be the greatest general in Europe, and the first man of his age. He became so.

To predicate of men, however, is a dangerous folly. The Baron de Pollnitz\*, speaking of Frederic the Great, when Prince Royal, asserted of him that his sentiments, behaviour, and actions, made it probable, that, if he ever came to the crown, his reign would be one of those mild and peaceful ones which procure kings the love of their people and of mankind in general. How this prediction was verified, the afflictions of Europe, for many a woeful and afflicting year, amply but too mournfully testify.

Vasari had a very high opinion of Catherine de’ Medicis. ‘ She was of a playful humour when young, ‘ but always in mischief,’ said he, in a letter to Carlo Guasoni†; ‘ but I adore her as if she were a saint in ‘ paradise. Her sweetness of temper cannot be painted; ‘ nor can I make a memorial of it with any pencil!’ How does all this harmonize with the massacre on St. Bartholomew’s day?

\* Letter, June 6, 1729.

† Florence, 1533.

## XXXII.

WHO EXEMPLIFY THE MAXIM, THAT SLIGHT TOUCHES ARE  
DEEP STROKES.

THIS may be illustrated by what Lord Waldegrave says of the conduct of the ministry in 1755. The Duke of Cumberland desired to strike a first blow at once. The Duke of Newcastle was of opinion that Admiral Hawke should take an idle turn in the Channel to exercise the fleet. The Lord Chancellor (Hardwicke) was against bringing matters to an immediate issue; and Lord Anson thought it right to show spirit.

Here we have the characters of the men at once. The Duke of Cumberland was irascible and a soldier; the Duke of Newcastle was timid and a politician; Lord Hardwicke was hesitating and a lawyer; Lord Anson brave and a sailor.

The mention of Lord Hardwicke reminds me of a passage in one of his letters to Dr. Birch. ‘The  
‘ foibles and vices of great men, celebrated for their  
‘ parts and actions, too much exposed to view, only con-  
‘ firm and comfort the vulgar; without teaching that  
‘ vulgar the imitation of their virtues\*.’ Aye—this is indeed but too true!

## XXXIII.

IMPARTIAL APPRECIATORS.

HARMODIUS laid claim to one merit,—a strict impartiality of judgment. No one ever heard him allude to the failings even of his adversaries without having also to listen to some of their virtues. But to hear men ac-

\* Addit. MSS., Brit. Mus., No. 4325, p. 68.

cuse others of the same faults of which they are guilty themselves, has frequently been above his philosophy.

The world loves impartiality, however seldom it may practise it, even to the nicest points of gradation; yet truth requires some caution. It is, indeed, from this consideration that some have asserted that there are no such qualities, or quantities, as vice, virtue, or truth. But—

‘ If white and black blend, soften, and unite,  
A thousand ways, is there no black or white?  
Ask your own heart, and nothing is so plain;  
’Tis to mistake them costs the time and pain.’—*Pope*.

Truth, however, is obvious only to few men: men, who resemble the horned-owl, which, having the faculty of dilating and contracting its pupil at pleasure, can see not only in the day but also in the night. Franklin has a curious passage: ‘ I do not find that I have gained  
‘ any point in either country, except that of rendering  
‘ myself suspected by my impartiality; in England,  
‘ of being too much an American; and, in America,  
‘ of being too much an Englishman\*.’

Impartiality in a judge is the most essential of qualities: without it, ability is the worst of serpents. This impartiality, however, must be exercised, not according to times and postures of affairs; judges having nothing to do with times or postures; these belonging to legislative powers; but according to the strictest of all possible regimens. When an arbitrator pleases both parties, it is well; but since he cannot often do that, it is a sufficient indication of impartiality that he pleases neither.

\* Nov. 28, 1768.

Impartiality is one of the finest, and therefore one of the most unfrequent qualities of the mind. It is the surest indication of an able judgment. Men, in general, have no idea of impartiality. They overvalue or undervalue everything. Indeed there is little or no truth either in history or biography ; almost everything having been written to suit the purposes of a party, or to gratify a feeling of enmity or affection.


Most men think of persons just as they are to them. They have no impartiality either in regard to friends or to enemies. If persons administer to their pleasures, hopes, or interests, they are everything that is excellent. That is, as long as they do so. But, from the moment they are believed to cease,—‘ Oh ! what a ‘ falling off is there, my countrymen ! ’

## XXXIV.

WHO ARE KNOWN BY SLIGHT PASSAGES WRITTEN OF  
THEM.

I know little of Dr. Brown, author of ‘ Lectures on the Philosophy of Mind ; ’ but I remember the pleasure I derived from reading, that, when a child, he was so susceptible of impression, that his mother frequently lulled him to sleep ‘ with his little eyes in tears of sympathy,’ at the mournful melody of ‘ The Flowers of the Forest.’

Some authors are well known by slight passages written of them by others ; and we may instance Lord Surrey, Hugh Kelly, and Frederic Schiller :—three writers as opposite to each other as it is possible to select. ‘ It is delightful,’ says Collins, ‘ to contemplate the cha-



‘racter of Lord Surrey: excellent in arts and in arms; a man of learning and a hero; of a generous temper and a refined heart. He united all the gallantry and unbroken spirit of a rude age, with all the elegance and graces of a polished era.’ Hugh Kelly, having been introduced to Johnson by Goldsmith, ‘Goldsmith,’ said the doctor when Kelly was gone, ‘never introduce an author to me again, who has written more than he has read.’ ‘Schiller,’ says Madame de Staël, ‘was the best of friends,—the best of fathers,—the best of husbands; no quality was wanting to complete that gentle and peaceful character, which was animated by the fire of genius alone. The love of liberty, respect for the female sex, enthusiastic admiration of the fine arts, inspired his mind; and in the analysis of his works it would be easy to point out to what particular virtue we owe the various productions of his masterly pen.’ This panegyric, pre-eminent as it may appear, is so far from being a concealed satire, that I am told by one who knew Schiller well, that it is even beneath the idea that he had always entertained of his merits\*.

## XXXV.

## WHO NEVER ALTER THEIR OPINIONS.

PLATINA is the least fusible of metals; but it may be melted into ingots by being mixed with arsenic. Gold,

\* How many writers, on the contrary, have we resembling the character Paul Cortese draws of Filelfo:—‘Habebat a natura ingenium vagum, multiplex, volubile. Exstant ab eo scripta, et poemata, et orationes; sed ut vita, sic erat in toto genere varius. Erat vendibilis sane scriptor, et is, qui opes, quàm scribendi laudem consequi malebat.’


the most valuable of metals, is yet so tractable in the hands of art, that it assumes any form we wish it to acquire. These two metals are emblematic of obstinacy and pliability.

Hawks are trained to obedience by hunger, watching, and fatigue. If stubborn, by dipping their heads into water, and then covering them with a hood: when obedient, by giving them of that food they like best. Obstinacy constitutes but a small part of their character. The onacre, on the other hand, is as obstinate as a mule, and as intractable as a vicious horse. The lama of Peru will never eat in the night, even though it may have fasted during all the preceding day; and if the pacos of the same country lie down with their load, they will suffer themselves to be slain rather than rise. The panther, when in the power of man, is never tamed; he is only in part subdued; and the utmost degree to which a tiger-cat suffers itself to be ameliorated, is to be stroked on the back.

Monkeys are less intractable than baboons, and less sullen than apes; but the most obstinate of all animals is the mule. 'Yet in the march of my armies,' said the Duke de Vendôme, 'I often inquired into the quarrels between the mules and the muleteers; when, to the disgrace of human nature, reason was almost always on the side of the mules.'

Some men are so determined in all cases, whether of injury or of sufferance, of reason or of folly, of right or of wrong:—

'Whose dispositions all the world well knows,  
Will not be robb'd or stopt;'



that we may compare them to the Cabal Duke of Lauderdale, not only in that, but in ambition, in insolence, in sullenness, and in obstinacy: men, too, whose minds, in all the mutations of opinion, undergo no change during the vicissitude of a multitude of years. I knew a person of this kind; and he long fancied himself to possess a robust intellect, a massive resolution, as it were, and an immoveable, irrevocable spirit; but a neighbour having one day called him a 'coxcomb,' he awakened from the delusion of many years, and acted as an agreeable neighbour ever after.

## XXXVI.

WHO SUFFER MORE FROM THEIR FRIENDS THAN FROM  
THEIR ENEMIES.

COULD Loyola\* rise from the grave, how he would exclaim against the men who have so often used his name to cover the most detestable of purposes! Many are they, indeed, who have suffered from their friends more than from their enemies.

Shall we turn to the dilemma of Louis XVI.? Dumourier asserts that he was decidedly for war in 1792; that he not only approved the memorial to the National Assembly on that subject, but made several corrections in it; and that he himself composed the discourse which he delivered to the Assembly on that occasion. Hence

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\* See 'Apologetici pro Vita Loyolæ per Petrum Ribadeneiram, 'contra Sim. Lithum,' 1599. Bouhours' Life; and Ribadeneira's 'Vita I. Loyolæ, qui Religionem Clericorum Societatis Jesu instituit.' 1587.

Burke accused the king of pulling down the pillars of his throne wilfully; and of being governed by a desire of reducing his nobility, clergy, and corporate magistracy. Wherefore? 'Because he could not bear the inconveniences attached to everything human; because he found himself cooped up and in durance by those limits which nature prescribes to desire and imagination; and was taught to consider, as low and degrading, that mutual dependence which Providence has ordained that all men should have on one another.'

This passage occurs in 'Burke's Memorial on the Affairs of France;' and, perhaps, a more severe or unjust censure has never been passed upon Louis by any of his adversaries.

## XXXVII.

## WHOSE VIRTUES AND VICES CANNOT BE CLASSED.

SOME call virtue agreeable to external fitness\*, consonant with right reason†, the truth of things‡, and conducive to general utility§. Some insist, that it depends upon opinion||; some that it is the dictate of the moral sense¶; some regard it as the impulse of a sensation\*\*; while others esteem it to be founded on the dictates of sympathy††.

'Virtue,' says Helvetius, 'is the habitude of directing our actions to the public good; the love of virtue

\* Dr. Clarke.

† Burlamaqui.

‡ Wollaston.

§ Hume, Godwin.

|| Mandeville.

¶ Hutcheson.

\*\* Ellis.

†† Adam Smith.



‘ is but the desire of general happiness ; virtuous actions  
 ‘ are those which contribute to that happiness.’

This appears to be an unchangeable truth, applicable to all ages and stages of society : it atones for many errors. It is certain, however, that all virtues are not equally evident to all persons ; for most men have power to recognise the lowest virtues only ; many recognise only the middle virtues ; few are they who have any appreciation for the highest. And this reminds me of a passage in Shaftesbury, in which it is implied, that the face of truth is not less fair and beautiful, notwithstanding the counterfeit visors which have been put upon her.

There are some deeds so difficult of classification, and some persons so mystical in their habits, manners, and actions, that virtues appear vices, and vices virtues ; in this resembling the ruby and the garnet, two stones, which cannot, in all instances, be distinguished the one from the other. It would seem, indeed, that some vices are given with some virtues, to work benefits, as some poisonous ingredients are, occasionally, compounded with restoratives, in order to make medicines more effective and essential.

‘ The path to peace is virtue ; what I show,  
 Thyself may freely on thyself bestow.’

*Juvenal, sat. x. Dryden.*

#### XXXVIII.

WHO MAY BE KNOWN BY THE PICTURES THEY GIVE OF  
 THEIR OWN LIVES.

THERE are some who may be graphically known by the picture which they draw of the manner in which



they live. Of this we may adduce Doddridge and Winkelman. Doddridge's description of his own manner of life will appear in another portion of this work; and as to Winkelman, he has turned himself absolutely inside out in his *Familiar Letters*. There we see his virtues, his vices, his prejudices, his humour, and his taste; but in no letter has he exhibited such an agreeable picture of his character, good fortune, and good taste, as in that in which he describes his condition, when living in the palace of Cardinal Albani.

Cardinal Retz—'I know a man,' said he, 'who has several small defects, but every one of those defects is the cause, or the product, of some good qualities in him. Cardinal Richelieu, on the other hand, has not one great quality that is not the product or the cause of some defect.'

I quote this passage as I shall do many others; not for its intrinsic value merely, but in order that my survey of men and things may be as wide and copious as my means of reading and observation will permit. In a subject so comprehensive, it is necessary to light our match,—as Bacon was proud to say he did,—at every man's candle.

There are some persons, most of whose faults spring out of their virtues. Some men are punished less in their vices than they are in their virtues. As all men have both, I, of course, have mine; and having them, I cannot but confess, that, to all and every appearance, and according to my best judgment, I have suffered more from my virtues than I have from my vices. If every man were allowed to judge for himself, perhaps

every man would come to the same result ; and all, upon a more strict investigation, perhaps, prove to be wrong !

It is not, however, impossible that all might be right ; for few, I think, will venture to deny that the state of human society is radically defective ; and therefore, that the chances for truth on one side are equal to those on the other. Indeed, I am inclined to the belief, that all vices, crimes, and misfortunes are attributable to the defective nature of human laws, education, opinions, and institutions. Vices, in the present arrangement, like vermes, have an astonishing power of reproduction. Happy will the time be when vices shall destroy vices, as the serpent of Moses swallowed all the serpents belonging to the Egyptians. We ought not, however, to forget what the poet has wisely taught us :

‘ Discord is harmony not understood,  
And partial evil universal good.’

#### XXXIX.

##### WHO ARE BEST KNOWN FROM THEIR ENEMIES.

SOME are best known, and others are only known, by the reputation of their enemies. Horace, Persius, Juvenal, Voltaire, Pope, and Byron, have immortalized many a blockhead ; and Hurd, Bishop of Worcester, will be less known by his edition of Cowley, his Dissertation on Chivalry and Romance, and even his Dialogues ; than by his Remarks on the Essay on the Human Understanding ; so ably, and, indeed, in most instances, so triumphantly, commented upon by the admirable Locke. In some cases, however, superior men

are only known from their connexion with inferior ones; as the distances of some planets are determined by their retrograde motions and the eclipses of their satellites.

Most of what we know of the Carthaginians, the Gauls, and many other nations, is derived from their enemies, the Romans. In the same manner, all we really know of the Samaritans is derived from the Jews\*: and it is well known that the Jews loathed the Samaritans even more than the Samaritans detested the Jews. A like observation applies to the Moors and Spaniards. We ought, therefore, to read the respective histories of the Carthaginians, Samaritans, and Moors, with very great caution.

## XL.

## WHO HAVE POWER TO DETECT MERIT.

IN a red-hot kiln a red colour only is distinguishable; but if we put dry wood into it, a white flame is produced, and all the other colours become visible. All animals require man to draw out their capabilities; without man, for instance, neither horses, nor camels, nor elephants, would be capable of draught. To be able to draw forth the talents and energies of others is a high qualification: to be willing to do so is a merit of the first order.

Napoleon had this faculty in a very superior degree.

\* An account of authors who have written on the Samaritans may be found in Gottlob Carpyovius; *Criticæ s. Vet. Testament.* part iii., c. iv.

He did it with an eagle's glance we are told\*; and when he had found it, he would attach it to his interests, as if it were something which, having emanated from himself, ought, therefore, to return to himself.

Dr. Blacklock was an eminent detector of merit; but with nobler views; and his reception and patronage of Burns can never be forgotten. 'There was never, perhaps,' says Heron, 'one among all mankind whom you might more truly call an angel upon earth, than Dr. Blacklock. He was guileless and innocent as a child; yet endowed with manly sagacity and penetration. His heart was a perpetual spring of benignity. His feelings were all tremblingly alive to the sense of the sublime, the beautiful, the tender, the pious, the virtuous.'

Professor Millar belonged, also, to the same noble class. 'His convivial talents,' says Mr. Graig, 'his unfailing vivacity and good humour, called out the powers of many, who would otherwise have remained silent and reserved; the liveliness of his fancy suggested infinite topics of conversation or of mirth; and his rich stores of information enabled him to supply endless sources of knowledge and amusement.'

In company it is highly agreeable to see any of the party endeavouring to draw out the talents of modesty, whether musical, conversational, or argumentative.

'Oh, there are looks and tones that dart  
An instant sunshine through the heart;  
As if the soul that minute caught  
Some treasure it through life had sought †.'

\* Bourrienne, iii., 20.

† Lalla Rookh.

## XLI.

WHO KNOW THEMSELVES BETTER THAN OTHER MEN  
KNOW THEM.

LA BRUYERE deduces the cause why a great merit, joined to great modesty, may languish a long time in obscurity, to the circumstance of most men's being so much engrossed by themselves, that they have no leisure to penetrate into others.

This is not the cause, but one of the causes. Causes there are many; such as want of opportunity to display, reluctance to use illegitimate means, and the distaste which most men have to those who exhibit open or secret proofs of superior ability. These causes, and a multitude of others, are as necessary to an inquirer after merit to know, as the Greek, Latin, French, Italian, Saxon, and Welsh languages are to a perfect acquaintance with English etymology.

Lord Verulam illustrates the minds of men very expressively and beautifully, by stating, that every man's mind is as a glass, having its surface differently cut, so that each receives, reflects, and refracts the rays that fall upon it. To know men is no easy matter; especially since some, like the French, are 'wiser than they appear;' and some, like the Spaniards, seem 'wiser than they are.' A friend, having inquired of Hobbes why a man remembers less of his own face, which he sees often in a glass, than he does of the face of a friend that he has not seen for a long time; Hobbes replied, 'a man remembers best those faces 'whereof he has the greatest impressions. Now, you

‘ know men look upon their own faces but for short fits ;  
 ‘ but upon their friends’ faces a long time together ; so  
 ‘ that a man may receive a greater impression from his  
 ‘ friend’s face in a day, than from his own in a year\*.’  
 This argument may be applied to the better knowledge  
 men have of their friends’ characters than they have of  
 their own.

Nature and wisdom teach the same language† ; hence  
 the wise man dares only to contemplate, not to deter-  
 mine ; and the best mode of beginning is to study our-  
 selves ; for the beginning of perfection is suspended from  
 self-contemplation ; and such is the basis of Plato’s  
 first Alcibiades.

Descartes seems to have imagined that his metaphy-  
 sical meditations were not only as capable of demon-  
 stration as geometry itself, but more so ‡. Shall a man,  
 then, appreciate his own talents ? Cæsar, Cicero and  
 Richelieu aimed at poetry ; and Hogarth valued his  
 ‘ Sigismunda ’ more than his ‘ Rake’s Progress ;’ and  
 it were an endless labour to recount the instances in  
 which men have valued themselves upon qualities they  
 never possessed. Notwithstanding all this, I am per-  
 suaded, that a man of common sense knows himself  
 much better than he is known by any other person ; for  
 he knows his own motives, and these are what no one  
 can be certain of but himself ; and he not always ; for  
 motives are, for the most part, curiously mixed.

\* See *Desiderata Curiosa*, vol. i., p. 23.

† *Nunquam aliud natura, aliud sapientia dicit.*

‡ Thus, ‘ *Eas rationes, quibus hic utor, certitudine et evidentia  
 geometricas æquare, vel etiam superare existimem.*’

That enthusiasm is indispensably requisite for discoveries and inventions in philosophy is admitted even by Aristotle. It is enthusiasm that makes the great orator, the great musician, the great sculptor, the great painter, the great general, the great poet, the great every thing. Kepler, however, carried his too far\*. Kepler had abundance of merit, and his genius was of a far greater order than the extract noted below would seem to imply; for it is a fearful and a dangerous undertaking to estimate ourselves; more especially in print.

We fancy that we deserve certain things much better than other men. This frequently proceeds from a double ignorance; ignorance of ourselves, and ignorance of other parties concerned. There is a self-ignorance, too, of good as well as of evil. Men have virtues which they do not even suspect; for they are sometimes not less ignorant of their strength than they are of their weakness. Speaking generally, men know as little of the mechanism of their minds as they do of the power which gives an influence to motion; and, as to their characters, after traversing the globe and mixing in every kind of society, they are often fated to feel, upon examination, that their own character is, even to themselves, still an unknown species of algebra.

\* ‘I dare insult mankind,’ said he, ‘by confessing that I am ‘he who has turned science to advantage. If I am pardoned, ‘I shall rejoice; if blamed, I shall endure it. The die is cast; I ‘have written this book; and whether it is read by posterity or by ‘my contemporaries, is of no consequence: it may well wait for a ‘reader during one century, when God himself, during 6000 years, ‘has not sent one observer like myself.’



## XLII.

WHOSE MERITS ARE UNKNOWN FROM BEING FREQUENTLY  
SEEN.

IF some flowers are doomed to waste their fragrance on the desert, some are doomed to waste it upon men, who are in perpetual necessity of seeing them. To see is to disregard, and sometimes even to despise. The heart's-ease is never celebrated, and yet it is one of the most beautiful of British plants. Thus, also, is it with the common broom; no one regards it. Its form and its colour are alike unnoticed. Linnæus, however, when he first beheld it on our heaths, was so enraptured, that he fell on his knees to examine it. It ought, therefore, to change its name, and be called Linné.

Some virtues, on the contrary, are despised, because they keep themselves concealed;

‘ And, like fair fruit in an unwholesome dish,  
Are left to rot untasted \*.’

Virtue, nevertheless, has a divine image, and affords charms even to the vicious. Noble actions should be continually in sight; because a view of other men's virtues strengthens our own. Some, it is true, have no need of such auxiliaries; but instances are rare in which men travel through a long course of persecution and misfortune with no other friend than their own haughty and supporting virtues.

My girls! my boys! remember this, and take the fate that Fortune may bestow: virtue and content are

\* *Troilus* and *Cressida*.

as preferable to pleasure and ambition, as grace and solidity are to brilliancy and show.

## XLIII.

## WHO DESIRE TO BE WHAT THEY ARE LEAST.

THE best way in the world to seem to be what we wish is 'to be so.' Sheridan, perhaps, would have given some illustrations of this maxim, had he written the comedy he sketched; since the subject of it was to ridicule every species of affectation: it was never finished, and the world sustains a loss.

Natural manners, however defective, must please some one; affected manners please few. Like the old man by his ass, in trying to please every one, we please no one, and lose our time into the bargain.

Those who desire to appear what they are least, remind me of an anecdote in the Memoirs of Baron de Grimm. Dr. Silva being at Bourdeaux, all the pretty women of the place visited him, with entreaties to cure them of a violent affection of the nerves, with which they were grievously tormented. Silva said nothing; neither did he prescribe any remedy. The ladies were afflicted at this; their nerves were dreadful! At length, pressed to explain the cause of his silence; 'Ladies,' said he, 'the complaint under which you labour is not 'an affection of the nerves; I am grieved to inform you 'that it is the *falling sickness*.'

On the next day, not a single patient visited Dr. Silva; they being, every one of them, cured. 'The 'conduct of Silva,' continues the Baron, 'was that of

‘ a man of acuteness and penetration ; *pretty women wish to interest ; they have no wish to terrify.*’

It cannot be denied that many young ladies would be almost happy to go into a consumption, so great a pleasure have they of being considered objects of interest to those who look at them.

Castracani having been asked when a person should eat, answered, ‘ If a rich man, when he is hungry ; if ‘ a poor one, when he can.’

We often admire that most, which we resemble least. Thus the Michael Angelo of essay writers preferred the Raffaele of essay writers. We are, also, apt to desire that most ardently which we have the fewest opportunities to obtain ; yet,


‘ To be contented with an humble lot  
Is the best wisdom, that the mind can show.’

Is it so ? then to be discontented with a splendid one must be folly indeed ; yet many such we know. Nothing satisfies them ; every thing gives them offence ; while, in the puerile insolence of their ingratitude, they forget even the remedies of life.

#### XLIV.

##### WHO ARE KNOWN BY ONE SYMPTOM ONLY.

It is a rule in symptomology (laid down by Laennec), that no conclusions are to be deduced from the analysis of the heart’s pulsations, unless after a sufficiently long repose ; and we have the authority of Arenbrugger and Corvisart for the assertion, that diseases of the worst



description may exist in the chest, unmarked by any symptom whatever, and discoverable only by percussion.

The same may be said of certain characters; they have only one key, as it were, by which they may be opened; only one criterion by which they may be judged. Most men, however, may be known, not only by one symptom, but by many.

The elephant has a quick and shuffling step. Might we not imagine that he was, therefore, dangerous to a rider? It is, nevertheless, certain, that he never stumbles even in the worst of roads; and that there is no animal more implicitly to be trusted.

#### XLV.

#### PREJUDICES.

PREJUDICE affords no knowledge; or just such a light as may be seen of a dark night in the Highlands, when we wander through the woods with a piece of split fir instead of a candle.

The passions of the multitude are not so violent as those of individuals; hence they are the sooner allayed. But it is not thus with prejudices. The prejudices of individuals, where those individuals are not destitute of common sense, dissipate before the light of reason. But the multitude have prejudices that appear destined for eternity; being more bound

‘Than is Prometheus, tied to Caucasus\*.’

Thus it would be impossible to persuade the majority

\* Titus Andronicus.

of mankind that the professions of a tailor, of a carpenter, of a mason, or of a blacksmith, are far more honourable than that of a mere soldier of fortune ; and yet what enlightened man will not concede that they are infinitely more so ? Hence, Alexander the Copper-smith is more to be regarded than Alexander of Phera, or Alexander of Macedon.

Prejudice is the greatest enemy reason has. For if knowledge tend to humanize mankind, prejudice serves to eradicate every nobler sentiment. It is, in fact, one of the worst and most effective of tyrants. Hence, if ten have been successful in pleading to the reason of mankind, thousands have been more so by pleading to the passions ; and hundreds of thousands by pleading to the prejudices.

Some prejudices remind us of the vast natural cavern near Szadelo (in Hungary), which presents a labyrinth so intricate, that when a man is once lost in it, it is almost impossible that he should ever find his way out. Others remind us of those vast tracts in Persia, once covered with grain, which the impolitic rapacity of the government has converted into tracts for half-famished flocks to wander and graze over.

Physical prejudices, moral prejudices, religious prejudices, and prejudices of the senses, all belong to what a French writer would call *une opinion sans jugement* ; as if the entertainers of them had eyes inaccessible to light, and ears inaccessible to sound.

Prejudices arise from wrong associations. Hence we find society much more cruel to individuals, than individuals are to society.

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Though no man of sound judgment permits himself to be governed by prejudices of any kind, whether of policy, physics, morals, or religion; yet a wise man will be, at all times, cautious of shocking the prejudices of others. Some admire, others condemn, what they have not the faculty to understand. Hence the gigantic effects of superstition, and hence the errors of presumption: for rather than do violence to their imbecility, men would, in a thousand instances, attempt to overturn the principles of nature herself. Eagerness to discover error leads to the committal of error; but one of the chief causes of error, as well as of prejudice, arises out of the unfortunate circumstance, that truth and error seldom place themselves side by side. Not only this; some are so unfortunately formed, that they can not only not discover truth themselves, but they cannot perceive it when it is pointed out to them by others. They cannot see it, even though it is as evident to the mental nerve of the wise, as St. Paul's, St. Peter's, and the Pyramids are to the visual capabilities of all. As to prejudices of religion, whether of the church or of the conventicle, the mosque or the synagogue, the wise man (in private life) will let every one think for himself, and be open to the convictions of truth, from whatever quarter it comes. And here we may remember with advantage, that the power which causes all bodies upon the earth to gravitate towards the centre of it, is the same mysterious influence which guides planets in their orbits, keeps suns to their systems, and governs the progress of the whole through the vast area of the universe.

## XLVI.

## WHO SEE MEN TOO NEARLY.

It is evident that, as light is not instantaneous, we can behold neither a star, a planet, nor even the sun itself in the actual place in which they are; and this place is still more at variance with our vision in consequence of refraction. In the same manner, we see few men, perhaps, in their proper places; not seeing them, then, in their proper places, we do not see them as they really are. There are certain characteristics, however, which all persons bear about them, that indicate value or want of value; and persons of discernment know them as well as seamen judge by blue water that they are in a deep sea, and by green or yellow water that they are in a shallow one.

The general error is, to neglect things immediately under our sight, for those which can be seen only in perspective, and therefore in a manner confused, mysterious, and superficial. A colossal statue, when beheld too nearly, has disgusting eyes and distorted features. Too near an observation, like a too distant one, is equally detrimental to a just estimation. The one is like tracing a fish by the line it forms in the water. All appears clear; yet nothing is distinct or defined; and the line itself soon vanishes. The other resembles the tracing the flight of an eagle, not by its own form, figure, or feather, but by its shadow, reflected and fluctuating on the declivities of a mountain.

There are many peculiarities in vision which bear analogy to moral consequences. The appearances of

objects are sometimes to be traced to their real resemblances to other things ; sometimes to their contrasts ; sometimes to their distances ; and sometimes to their contiguities. Halley told Sir Isaac Newton\*, that while he was in his diving-bell, of a clear day, under the surface of the sea, the upper part of his hand appeared of a red colour, like a damask rose ; but that the water, and the under part of his hand, looked green † ; and Herschel assures us, that though a faint star in the neighbourhood of a large one will often become very conspicuous ; yet that it will totally disappear to the eye when it is turned full upon it, and thus appearing and disappearing as often as we please.

The first of these appearances depends upon the medium of observation ; the second on the organ observing. The uses of objects seem very different to one, who takes only a mere glance, from what they will to a second, who looks at them specifically in their insulated relations ; and these will appear, in turn, still more varied to those who, taking a wide and comprehensive view of the natural and intellectual horizon, trace them in all their developments, and thence proceed to deductions from all their causes to the utmost boundary of their results.

Colardeau, the French poet, is said to have described nature well, though he saw only black and white in colours, and the different combinations of light and shade ; and very certain it is that Milton, though blind, knew objects, which he no longer saw, much better than thousands who still saw them every day.

\* Optics, p. 115.

† Playfair.



There is a species of gossamer spider which has four of its eight eyes larger than the other four. Caterpillars have twelve eyes in their heads ; and the polyphemus insect not less than two thousand ! I question, however, whether these insects see more intensely than animals that have only two. It is not the extent of view that is so greatly valuable ; but the accuracy with which the object is viewed ; and no two objects can be precisely measured, if both engage the visual faculty at the same time.

Seals have the power to shorten, or elongate, the axis of the organ of vision at their own pleasure. They are thus suited both for land and water ; being able to see well in both media of density. Man can see accurately only through the medium of sound reason. He is dazzled by novelty, clouded by prejudice, distracted by passion, and rendered bitter by disease.

#### XLVII.

##### WHO MAY BE APPROACHED.

SOME of us resemble the colouring of Titian, as it were, and some that of Rembrandt. The former may be inspected with the utmost delicacy of minuteness ; but the latter must be seen from a particular point.

Fenelon could not be approached too closely. He, at all times, appeared like a messenger from heaven. His rival Bossuet, however, required to be seen at the distance, as it were, of many miles ; and that, too, from a spot in which all irregularities might be reduced to a level. He was naturally moral and religious ; but bigotry converted his religion first into intolerance, and then into cruelty.

## XLVIII.

## WHO MAY BE JUDGED OF FROM LIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES.

VIRTUES and vices are to be seen in small circumstances ; even in a saying or a jest. The wisdom of a commonwealth, after a similar manner, may be known from a cot.

Something might have been predicted of Charles XII. from his having translated Quintus Curtius at twelve years of age. The character of Peter the Great, too, might have been foretold by the circumstance, that when he passed rivers or rivulets, he felt a species of convulsion, attended by cold sweats, agitate his whole frame ; and having, in consequence, determined to conquer this affection, he did so, by jumping into a river entirely over his head. From that time he enjoyed the element, and became the best seaman in his dominions. Simple as the action may appear, perhaps not one man in fourteen millions could be capable of such a triumph.

As it is certain that small instances denote character strongly, it follows that he, who judges from light touches, will be as often right as he who judges from strong lines. And if it be an agreeable mental exercise to trace an invention or a thought to its first conception, and thence to its expansion ; it is not less so to detect commanding principles in diminutive symptoms. The future eminence of Lord Mansfield was, in some degree, indicated by his wandering, when a youth, upon his native mountains, declaiming to the winds. Adam Ferguson, in the same manner, gained a lofty enthu-

siasm from the wilds of Athol and the glens of the Highlands. Some one wrote of Dr. Johnson—

‘ Ill-bred, and overbearing in dispute,  
A scholar and a Christian—but a brute !’

One small circumstance, however, attests his real benevolence more, perhaps, than all his volumes, viz., his anxiety to preserve the happiness of children. Anaxagoras, too, may be known much after the same manner; for, at the point of death, having been desired by the inhabitants of Lampsacus to signify his last wish, his answer was, ‘ Let the day of my death be ever held as a holiday by all the children of Lampsacus.’

Paul the First of Russia, however, seems to have carried the habit of judging from slight circumstances rather too far; for his contempt of Napoleon changed into admiration, not from hearing that the consul had changed his policy; but upon hearing a description of the graceful manner in which he mounted his horse. His Imperial Majesty would, no doubt, have been still more charmed with Prince Henry, afterwards Henry V.

‘ I saw young Henry with his beaver on  
Rise from the ground like feather’d Mercury;  
And vaulted with such ease into his seat,  
As if an angel dropped down from the clouds,  
To charm the world with noble horsemanship.’

#### XLIX.

WHO ARE VALUED AT A DISTANCE.

‘ Glories, like glow-worms, afar off shine bright;  
But viewed too near, have neither heat nor light.’

*Webster—Dutchess of Matfy.*

SOME men are much esteemed where they are not known; and as much detested where they are. Pompey was a hero when abroad; but, at Rome, he was insulted by every fool and blockhead who chose to take the trouble of offending him.

Feudal kings were objects of admiration when contemplated at a distance; when approached, they were seen divested of majesty and shorn of power. The Popes, revered in all the kingdoms of Christianity, were at Rome, for many years, not only objects of fear, but sometimes of hatred, and not unfrequently of contempt.


Statesmen, seen through the medium of the imagination, are occasionally worthy of legitimate admiration. Approach the Palace, the Treasury, and St. Stephen's, they are beheld, but too often, the mere tools of a party, upheld by treachery and cabal. Could we but step behind every man's curtain, scarcely one of us would be martyrs either to jealousy, envy, or discontent.

## L.

## DETECTORS OF ERRORS.

WHEN young, I loved to detect errors. I thought it showed wisdom, wit, and ability. Now I am comparatively old, I find it the most common of all common accomplishments. I disdain it, therefore; not only for its meanness, but for its facility.

Socrates seldom advanced any direct opinions of his own. He found the world so full of errors, and men so loath to be convicted of them, that he esteemed it better to attack errors first; that he might, on their



ruins, erect probabilities ; and, where possible, truths. Admirable were it, had all lovers of detection the same governing principle !

This reminds me of a passage in one of Pope's letters to Dean Swift :—' I am almost at the end of my morals, as I have been long ago of my wit ; my system is a short one, and my circle narrow. Imagination has no limits ; that is a sphere in which you may move on to eternity ; but where one is confined to truth, or, to speak more like human creatures, to the appearance of truth, we soon find the shortness of our tether.'

In respect to errors in natural philosophy, Reaumur\* has a very correct observation, viz., that it sometimes happens that indifferent observers detect what has been previously unnoticed even by the most skilful interpreters of nature. In life, too, we find that unlearned men frequently see, where even the learned are almost totally blind.

#### LI.

#### NATIONS TOO HIGHLY APPRECIATED.

SPARTA was a city in which fortitude was more highly appreciated than justice. Even Polybius felt it compulsive to confess, that whatever the Spartans might be to each other, in their transactions with foreign states or individuals, they had little or no respect either to moderation, honour, or justice. They exemplified a maxim in Thucydides—that nothing is unjust in a prince or a republic that may prove beneficial. Yet they pleased Diogenes so well, that when he

\* Mem. iv. 505.

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went from Sparta to Athens, he declared that he had come from the apartments of men to those of women. I should, however, be sorry to breathe long in a house, a village, a town, a city, or even a country, in which Diogenes would have been delighted to live.

The Romans, also, have been too highly appreciated; for some have almost associated them with the gods they worshipped. They are best known, however, from their adversaries. ‘They are arrogant and cruel,’ said Hannibal. ‘They would give laws to the world. ‘They would make the peace or war of the whole universe depend upon them. They would prescribe limits to every other nation, yet preserve none themselves.’ ‘*Raptores orbis*\*,’ said Galgacus, ‘postquam cuncta vastantibus defuere terræ, et mare scrutantur; si locuples hostis est, avari, si pauper, ambitiosi; quos non oriens, non occidens satiaverit, soli omnium opes atque inopiam, pari affectu concupiscunt. Auferre, trucidare, rapere, falsis nominibus imperium, atque ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant†.’

They were ever ready for combat; they made themselves umpires, parties, or dictators in every dispute;

\* I quote (throughout the whole of this work) from original's or translations, as may have been most convenient at the moment of writing.

† Sismondi, in his parallel between the Greeks and Romans:— ‘Ils ornent leurs chapeaux de fleurs odoriférantes; leur manteau est drapé d’une manière pittoresque, comme celui des statues antiques; leur langage est figuré et plein de feu; leurs traits expriment toutes les passions, et en effet ils sont susceptibles de l’amour le plus impétueux, de la colère la plus bouillante.’—*Hist. des Rép. Ital.*, vi.

and under the title of ally, never ceased to indulge an ambition of extending their empire, or of consolidating their influence. 'They were only not contemptible in 'crime,' says Tacitus\*, 'because they were powerful.'

Historical pictures frequently cloud our judgment by the skill with which they are wrought, as coloured glasses never fail to increase the labour of the eyes. In appreciating mankind, it is necessary that we take neither too near nor too scrutinizing a view. If we do so, we fall into the error, which characterized the brother of Hume the historian. 'David is a good enough 'sort of man,' said he, 'but rather narrow-minded.' We must learn to generalize our observations, if we would take the fullest advantage of the particular objects presented to our view. The scale of nature must be resorted to, if we desire to weigh, with delicate precision, either merits or capabilities; and if we would judge, with anything like accuracy, the relative virtues or vices of particular persons, we must first acquaint ourselves with those of mankind in the gross.

Men, however, for the most part, judge as if it made no difference on which side a view is taken: as if men, women, infants, and the old resembled the Vatican group of Psyche and Cupid; the proportions of which are so harmoniously disposed, that they may be seen, with undiminished effect, whichever way they are viewed. Marble spheres have smoothness and roundness for their characteristics, turn them as we may. But they may, also, have a multitude of beauties or

\* In Vit. Agric.

spots, lines or figures, on one side, which may be totally invisible on the other.

If some nations have been valued too highly, others have been appreciated too lowly. We may instance the Bœotians in ancient times, and the Don Cossacks in modern ones. Montesquieu justly says\* of the former, that notwithstanding they were the heaviest, they were the wisest people of Greece; never roused or misguided by orators, and guided only by a sensation of misery and happiness. Clarke says of the latter†, that they are good husbands, good fathers, virtuous daughters, valiant and dutiful sons; generous, hospitable, free from prejudice, honourable, polished in manners, well-informed, free from prejudice, open, sincere, and honourable. Throughout Europe, however, they are considered as little removed from barbarism.

## LII.

## WHO MAY BE JUDGED OF BY THEIR FURNITURE, &amp;c.

SOME may be judged of, in no slight degree, by their furniture. For while some must have every thing light, elegant, and fashionable; with others, like Wilhelm Meister's father, everything must be not only solid but massive; the glass, the plate, the chairs, and the tables. The coach must be large and heavy; the horses with tails almost down to the hoofs; the harness embossed; and the coachman as large as two.

The Spartans and Athenians might, in no small

\* *Grand. et Décad. c. 5.*

† *Travels.*



degree, be estimated also by their houses and furniture. In respect to the houses of the former, the saw was the only instrument used for doors, and the hatchet the only one used for boards. Their furniture also partook of the same severe simplicity. At Athens, who does not know how magnificent were their houses and temples, and how superb and elegant their furniture and ornaments of every description? No people more elegant; scarcely any more voluptuous and vicious. The best men breathed with the worst.

## LIII.

## WHO TAKE APPROPRIATE DISTANCES, &amp;c.

THERE are many beautiful spots in the vicinity of London; near Hampstead, for instance, Highgate, Dulwich, Sydenham, and Shooter's Hill; but he who should celebrate them would almost render himself ridiculous; so indifferent are men to what they continually behold or hear of. It is thus, perhaps, at Paris and Vienna. But at Edinburgh, at Florence, at Rome, and at Naples, it is otherwise.

When I contemplate the calm and innocent delight that is derived from acts of benevolence, I am led to wonder that men should not be led to devote half their fortunes to benevolent purposes. But when I remember the general ingratitude of mankind, I almost wonder they should contribute a single sou. Happy are those who have power to see and to feel, that ingratitude in some ought never to be used as a shield against the misfortunes of others. We may learn something, too, from

the circumstance, that the perfumes of flowers are sweeter, when wafted by the air, than when close under our windows. Madame de Maintenon frequently exclaimed, ' I have seen things too near.' In respect to distance, well is it for those whose views of men and things open by little and little. For if many things are invisible to us from ignorance, others become equally so by the extent of our knowledge. Thus Uranus is but little known, because of its remoteness from the sun; and Mercury still less because of its proximity.

The apple-blossom is very beautiful when near, but at a distance it loses most of its variety and richness. Many cities, on the contrary, especially in Asia, Africa, and South America, seem beautiful at a distance, but then it is only at a distance. On approaching them closely, every thing presents an appearance of ruin, filth, poverty, and wretchedness. Friends and enemies, in the same manner, stand too near our monuments to measure their proportions. Enemies sketch a lion or a serpent; friends draw portraits of friends as they do of their mistresses. There is truth nor justice in either.

Princes should be contemplated nearly. Seen from a distance, even bad ones excite an imposing veneration; but, examined closely, they but too often present materials, like those of a modern ruin, in which there is neither beauty nor strength, utility nor magnificence.

Campi sketched figures on the cupola of St. Gismondi, at Cremona, in which, though all the figures were of huge dimensions, none of them appeared to be of a size larger than nature. Coques, on the other hand, painted portraits of an inch and half; and yet their


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freedom of touch made them almost assume the absolute size of life.

Life itself often appears to resemble the crust of *Lichen Geographicus*, which, occasionally, presents to the eye the outlines of a map, intersected with rivers and studded with towns, villages, and hamlets, destitute of inhabitants. All is deception !

Madame de Staël was accustomed to assert, that all may be known either in one hour or in ten years. She allowed no intermediate impressions. But should we know the views and wishes of a man, we could not, till we knew not only his capacities but his means, foretell in what manner he would act, even on one occasion, much less on two. For man is as great an enigma to himself, as he is to others ; and here, perhaps, we may be allowed to remark, that the Eternal only can judge men by their whole periods of life ; man having the ability to judge the conduct of his fellows only at particular periods ; and then only by his actions, and those in parts like half sentences. Action is perhaps the best criterion ; but many bad actions have been caused by good intentions ; as many good ones have vegetated from the roots of bad ones.

Many would see rightly, if they had power ; but they are deficient in organs. Most can see ; but to see with accuracy is the favoured privilege of few : for to see well, we must know how to see ; or all things will appear, if not like shadows sketched on walls, at least like reflections on the surface of a stream ; stationary for a time, yet flickering. We, in fact, never commit more errors in judging, than when we have power to



see only in parts. It is this which so frequently induces us to suspect the purity of others, and to set at defiance both verbal evidence and mathematical demonstrations: for as in telescopes, a magnifying power, carried to a high pitch, is injurious to penetrating power; so should not the mental lens be too extended in its range:

‘ We wisely strip the steed we mean to buy.’

The general character of the scenery among the Andes is that of sublimity; but they must be seen at a considerable distance; for nearness conceals magnitude. Unless thus contemplated, the traveller looks in vain for beautiful or sublime perspectives. The Pyrenees, the Alps, and the chain of mountains, stretching from the north-east to the north-west of Greece, including Pelion, Ossa, and Parnassus, are far more picturesque and beautiful. They are even more associative of sublimity.

Many persons lose all power of judgment by seeing too nearly and gazing too eagerly, as Democritus is said to have lost his sight by looking too steadfastly on the sun. Hence the judgment of that man is little to be valued, who draws conclusions on important subjects only from the limited horizon of his own circle. Experience, trials, difficult situations, commixture with various classes of society and various orders of intellect;—these are all necessary for a true judgment of men and things; as repeated experiments are essential to acquirement in respect to chemistry, galvanism, magnetism, and electricity.

He who sees a battle from the tower of a church,

knows more of the whole than any of the combatants ; let them be engaged ever so deeply. Indeed, the more deeply engaged the less likely are they to know.

‘ He that stands and sees the aime,  
Maie judge what shott doth lose the game :  
What shooter beats the marke in vaine,  
Who shooteth fair, who shooteth plaine.’

*Churchyard’s Charge.* 1580.

We can see no object in all its directions at the same moment ; not even so small a substance as a grain of sand. Too many views, also, may incumber the judgment ; operating as large telescopes do upon the fixed stars ;—making them less.

Few can see things or judge of persons with exact precision who are subject to disease. Pope was an exception ; but even in him we occasionally see prejudice, asperity, and malice usurping the places of precision, impartiality, and truth.

Those, who live upon high mountains, see the sun and moon earlier, later, and for a longer continuance, than those who live below.

Objects are best seen when pointed out to us. We then gaze at them with a novelty dispossessed of surprise ; our organs being instructed. But it depends on the purity of our judgments, whether an after view be measured accurately or not : neighbourhood may distract, distance may cloud, or the telescope of vision be wrongly adjusted : for we ought never to forget, that the lens, which enables us to see well near, does not always assist us to view objects at a distance.


A grain of sand may be magnified to so many millions

of times its own bulk, as to assume the appearance of a vast rock. In spite of this, we are no more able to attain greater knowledge of its constituents, than we could before.

We see closely sometimes, very closely, but with another man's judgment. By this we acquire a disease of the eyes, as it were; as in India, during the hottest of the summer, a disorder, caught from eating mangoes, is carried through the medium of a small black fly from the eye of one to that of another.

There are two orders of judges: The one finds pleasure in analyzing defects, the other in analyzing beauties; the first lives upon stimulants, the second on emollients. Before an author is condemned, read his works, hear his arguments, and examine them in all their bearings; and this not only in justice but in policy; for none are so ready to condemn as those who are unable to investigate.

Men take as different views of the same question as those do who occupy different stations in a mountainous country; where every field, and sometimes every step, alters all the combinations connected with the object in the distant perspective. We ought, therefore, to be as temperate, when we are differed from in opinion, as when we are travelling. How opposite are the appearances of Snowdon, Plinlimon, and Cader-Idris, when beheld from the north, the south, the east, and the Irish Channel! A certain distance is always requisite when we would judge grand objects, great men, or speculative opinions. Indeed all things have particular points whence they should be viewed; for it is in life as it is in battle, where a general can judge much better of



an action at a distance, than if he be personally engaged in the field. For the most part, we are either too near or too distant.

For this reason we are seldom able to appreciate justly; for most of us want the opportunities enjoyed by Manni, who was enabled, in his 'History of the Jubilees,' to enumerate not only the names of illustrious persons who visited Rome during those periods; but to include an account of in what manner, and to what degree, those personages inoculated their respective countries with the manners, customs, and practices of Italy.

## LIV.


## WHO CENSURE AND YET PURSUE THE SAME COURSE.

POLITICIANS often blame the acts of their adversaries; and yet, the moment they come into power, pursue the same system themselves. We may give an instance, out of myriads, in the enemies of Sir Robert Walpole. They condemned his measures; and yet, almost immediately after his deposition, adopted them. But the inconsistencies, in this respect, of persons that pursue the trade of politics, are so manifold, and often so ludicrous, that it would be wasting time to make further remarks upon them. They must be left to themselves. Our volumes are too small for the number.

## LV.

## WHO ARE KNOWN BY THEIR DRESS.

No one is to be implicitly judged of by his taste in music, painting, architecture, fine residences, fine clothes,



or a love of flowers. All these are equally characteristic of men of virtuous elegance and men of an elegant baseness. There is, however, this difference; the former will enjoy them only when they can do so with discretion; the latter will perpetrate every species of atrocity to acquire the means to enjoy them.

The method of knowing a nobleman, undistinguished by a riband, a star, or a garter, from a mere gentleman; a lady of rank from the wife of a merchant, or the daughter of a banker, is somewhat altered of late years. There is no mark less distinguishing. Even Cloten would have altered his language:—

————— ‘Thou villain base!  
Know’st me not by my clothes?’

And here we may remark, that Cloten is drawn as having been more enraged against Imogen\*, for saying that the meanest of Leonatus’ garments were more dear to her than all the hairs he had about him, than any other expression of contempt. He thought the splendid vapoury of dress the most distinguishing sign of rank and royalty; and in this the poor fool was far from being singular.

The Honourable John Damer (husband of the celebrated amateur sculptress) would sometimes wear three new suits in a day. At length his folly led him to suicide†; and, a short time after his death, his wardrobe was sold by auction, and realized for his widow no less a sum than 15,000*l*.

Some one has truly remarked, that a neglect of dress

\* *Cymbeline*, act ii. sc. 3.

† Aug. 15, 1776.



in *red* people multiplies their wrinkles and exposes their infirmities; and that an affected curiosity of apparel has a similar effect. Of this there can be no doubt.

The mortification of vanity sometimes produces a gratification of it. Perhaps we may adduce an anecdote of the Duke of Newcastle as an instance:—‘ His Grace kept the most princely table and the greatest number of domestics of any nobleman in the three kingdoms; nor would he suffer any one of them, during a series of years, to dispose of any part of their old liveries, but made this usual perquisite up to them by *douceurs*; and the cast clothes were carefully deposited in a large store-room appropriated for that purpose, where they remained until after his Grace’s decease, when they were sold; at which time the number of suits were so great, that for a year or two after scarcely a carter, coachman, drayman, chairman, or porter, in London, but wore Newcastle livery.’ Now it would be rather difficult to determine, in this instance, whether the Duke would be more pleased, or displeased, at the conduct of his successor; for though his Grace might have detested the sale, his vanity might, perhaps, have been still more largely gratified; since the distribution of so many suits made his livery almost as common as that of the king.

Silver, gold, tinsel, colours, uniforms, bells, buttons, and beads, have a most astonishing effect upon savages, semi-barbarians, slaves, servants, soldiers, boys, girls, young women, married women, old women, tailors, and those they make, viz. beaux, blockheads, and those old men who are commonly called either old beaux or old

women. And this may remind us of Lord Carlisle and Lord Mansfield. Lord Carlisle is represented by Lord Clarendon as having had an universal understanding ; but, finding that business was attended with rivals and vexations, he became so greatly attached to diet, equipage, and dress, that, though he acquired great wealth from the crown, he left neither one house nor one acre of ground to be remembered by.

Lord Mansfield was rather opposite to this ; and Sir Joshua Reynolds, having finished his portrait, inquired if his Lordship thought it a likeness. ‘ I cannot say,’ answered Lord Mansfield, ‘ for as my servant dresses me, and puts my wig on every morning, it is unnecessary for me to look in a glass ; and, to tell you the truth, I have not done so for the last thirty years of my life.’

The works of Goldsmith are distinguished by the chastest simplicity ; yet his character may be described best by his dress ; which not only Boswell, but Northcote, represent as having been exceedingly tawdry. We may remember, also, that not only Helvetius, but Mr. Fox, walked and dressed, in early life, like finished coxcombs. The latter even vied with the late Lord Carlisle as to who should have the honour of introducing red shoes. How plain in dress he afterwards became,—how unaffected in his manners,—is known to every one. Greater, however, than these may yet be cited. How was Aristotle distinguished amid the crowd ?—by the multiplicity of rings he wore upon his fingers ; and Buffon never suffered himself to be seen, even by vil-

lagers, but in full dress, and with his fingers loaded with rings.

As to the ladies, their privilege is dress ;

‘ Show me not thy painted beauties,  
Those impostures I defy \* ;’

but beauties, set off by elegance of taste in dress, are not to be defied. The effects of plainness of dress, too, are not always unaccompanied by danger ; and even the holy father, Chrysostom, acknowledged it.

‘ Behold,’ thou say’st, ‘ my gown is plain,  
My sandals are of texture rude ;  
Is this like one whose heart is vain,  
Like one who dresses to be woo’d ?’

‘ Deceive not thus, young maid, thy heart,  
For far more oft in simple gown  
Doth beauty play the tempter’s part,  
Than in brocades of rich renown !

‘ And homelier garb hath oft been found,  
When typed and moulded to the shape,  
To deal such shafts of mischief round,  
As wisest men can scarce escape †.’

#### LVI.

WHO DESIRE TO REDUCE ALL MEN TO THEIR OWN LEVEL.

THESE are perpetually reminding one of a passage in the fable of the Bees.

‘ Others follow’d mysteries,  
To which few folks bind ’prentices,  
As sharpers, parasites, pimps, players,  
Pickpockets, coiners, quacks, soothsayers,

\* George Withers.

† Moore’s translation.

And all those that in enmity,  
 With downright working, cunningly  
 Convert to their own use the labour  
 Of their good-natured heedless neighbour.  
 These were call'd knaves ; but bar the name,  
 The grave industrious were the same ;  
 All trades and places know some cheat ;  
 No calling is without deceit.'

Lady Wortley Montague says of Pope, that his works are copied from the French eloquence, with thoughts, poor and trite, dressed up in pompous language. Some one, too, wrote of his Homer :

' Pope came off clean with Homer, but they say,  
 Broome went before, and kindly swept the way.'

I will not insinuate that these writers were actuated by a wish to bring Pope down to their own level ; but that they judged maliciously is distinctly evident.

Many persons, in fact, resemble the viper, the young of which, in times of danger, seek security in the mouth of its mother. Some we may compare to the owl, the kestrel, and the golden eagle, which love to build in ruined castles and towers ; others resemble the jackal, the hyæna, and the rompo, which, having disinterred the dead, devour them with avidity. There is one consolation, nevertheless ; they often fight, in effect, violently for those they fight violently against.

#### LVII.

##### WHO GIVE PREMATURE OPINIONS.

' Quid, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando.'

Most persons presume to give opinions in respect to the conduct and sentiments of others, long before they

are acquainted with the scope of the sentiment, or the cause and extent of the conduct. Thus Battus, having been commanded by the Pythian oracle to found a colony in Libya, returned before he had explored the country, to ask why he had met so many difficulties; upon which the oracle answered,

‘ Know’st thou, then, Libya better than the god,  
Whose fertile shores thy feet have never trod?  
He, who has well explored them, thus replies;  
I can but wonder at a man so wise.’

Heister, having found no stamens in an aloe, pronounced the Linnæan system wholly useless. Just so wise, and no wiser, are seven-tenths of mankind. They remind one of the ignorance of the Greek priest, who, in his condemnation, praised the pictures of Titian that he refused to accept. ‘ Your scandalous figures stand out,’ said he, ‘ from the canvass like a group of statues;’ good pictures, like pure motives, being much more difficult to understand than bad ones. Besides, many men resemble the airs, composed by that exquisite musician, Gluck, each of whose operas are said to consist of a chain: no single air can be sung with much effect; and the whole must be heard, for the hearer to be much pleased with the separate parts.

Men, I say, and wise ones, too, frequently give opinions before they know the grounds on which they ought to be founded. Milton is an example; at least, I hope King Charles was not actually guilty of a crime so enormous as that the poet lays to his charge\*.

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\* ‘ King Charles began his reign with his father’s funeral. I do not say murder; and yet all the marks and tokens of poison,

## LVIII.

## WHO ARE KNOWN BY THEIR MANNERS AT PLAY.

FEW men love to be beaten at cards, back-gammon, or chess. Sidonius, however, relates of Theoderic, that when engaged at dice, he alternately displayed his eagerness, his skill, his patience, and his cheerfulness of temper. If he lost, he laughed; and if he won, he was modest and silent. Yet Sidonius confesses, that, notwithstanding this apparent indifference, his courtiers chose to solicit favours in the moments of victory; and that he had himself derived some benefit from his losses. Theoderic seems, however, to have had higher aims: for, while engaged in the game, he watched the countenances and manners of his officers in the moments of loss, of victory, and of suspense.

Tamerlane is said to have been pleased, when a subject won a game of chess of him; but Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, is almost the only good player I ever heard of, who received more pleasure from overlooking the game than playing it. To be able to act a similar part in life were delightful!

A Polish noble was playing with Casimir, surnamed the Just; and having lost all his money, he struck the king on the ear, in the height of his passion. The

‘that may be, appeared in his dead body; but that suspicion  
‘lighted upon the Duke of Buckingham only, whom the king not-  
‘withstanding cleared to the Parliament, though he had killed  
‘the king, his father; and not only so, he dissolved the Parlia-  
‘ment, lest the matter should be inquired into.’—*Defence of the  
People of England.*

king forgave him. 'I am not surprised at his conduct,' said his majesty: 'for, having no power to revenge 'himself upon Fortune, it is no wonder he should attack 'her favourite in me.'

This anecdote reminds one of Louis XIV.: for a doubt having arisen at a game of back-gammon, in which Louis claimed the throw, all the courtiers remained silent. The adversary disputed the cast; when who should come in but the Count de Grammont. 'You shall decide,' says the king. 'Your majesty is in the 'wrong,' answered the Count immediately. 'How?' inquired Louis: 'do you pronounce without hearing a 'single word?' 'Had there been the smallest doubt,' returned de Grammont, 'these gentlemen would, most 'assuredly, have all declared in favour of your majesty.'

There is, undoubtedly, much of the real temper to be learnt both of men and of women, from the manner in which they play at hazard, ombre, whist, quadrille, and even picquet. Some will cheat, some be little scrupulous as to truth and concealment, some are overjoyed at winning or miserable at losing. But chess shows less of the temper, than of the mind. This game has been compared to a battle; but it resembles, much more intimately, the intrigue of a cabinet; in which no one can adequately act the part of first minister, who does not see the various motives, and observe the different vibrations, which agitate, or harmonize, the entire machine of general politics.

No one hated to lose at cards more than Napoleon. 'He could not bear,' says Bourrienne, 'that Fortune

‘ should frown upon him in a game of cards any more  
‘ than in a field of battle.’

In going to Egypt his conversation was of science and art ; hope and victory sitting near him. But, on his return, all was monotonous ; and apprehension rendered him listless. Then he resorted to cards ; and as a short game suited best, Vingt-et-un was the game.

He played chess, too, occasionally : but never liked to lose. ‘ I remember, at Mantua,’ says Bourrienne, ‘ his losing a game to General Beauvoir, reckoned one  
‘ of the best players in Europe, who gave him odds.  
‘ He was any thing but well pleased. He liked very well  
‘ to play with me, because, though the superior, I was  
‘ not so much so as to gain always. When successful,  
‘ he would give over playing in order to rest upon his  
‘ laurels.’

When closely analyzed, these exceedingly great men are but too often found to be exceedingly little !

## LIX.

WHO HAVE NO OPINION, IN RESPECT TO WHAT THEY  
APPROVE OR CONDEMN.

THOSE persons, who have the faculty of saying all they know upon one subject at one sitting, often regard the range of their own ideas to be the utmost boundary of the human intellect. But some have no opinions at all. They are convinced by the arguments of the last book they read ; and think with the last person they see open their lips.

‘ Thus the cameleon, who is known  
To have no colours of his own,



Borrows from his neighbour's hue  
His white or black, his green or blue.'—*Prior*.

Some there are who cannot be convinced of their errors, or beaten out of their prejudices, even should an angel descend from heaven.

Some are so impenetrable, that you can beat nothing in, even with a hundred hammers; others so retentive of their opinions, that a hundred hammers could not beat them out. Many make the most ado, who are the least concerned: and thousands are the men, who hate opinions, facts, persons, and things, without the capacity of showing the slightest possible reason. Just as the winds blow, without any one's knowing from what recess of the universe they are generated, or to what quarter they are permitted to proceed.

'Non amo te, Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare:  
Hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te.'—*Martial*.

A stranger entering into a society, and seeing the zeal, fury, and passion, frequently exhibited by combatants in argument, would naturally suppose, that those wordy warriors have, at least, *some* real opinions relative to the doctrines they applaud or condemn; and yet nothing is more certain than that, in nine instances out of ten, they have none! They agree for the white to-day; for the purple to-morrow; and equally extravagant and equally ridiculous are they in both.

## LX.

## LOVERS OF DETRACTION.

———‘ My learned Lord Cardinal,  
Deliver all with charity.’—*Henry VIII.*

CERTAIN orders make a point of talking ungenerously of others, as they respectively retire. A man or a woman of this kind have no necessity to be branded either with mark or with name. They carry their punishments, wherever they think they are known.

Some, too, have the custom of provoking others to certain words and actions, and then reproaching them for what they have themselves provoked.

Men and women, who talk much against others in company, are not only very ill-bred, and very insolent, but very imprudent and blind. For the company never fail to expect they will talk of them, as of others. They become, in consequence, exceedingly captious ; they apply every thing to themselves ; they fancy every one will be looking and talking of them, the moment they go ; they have scarcely a moment’s repose. Smiles and shrugs are dangerous things !

———‘ What king so strong,  
Can tie the gall up of a slanderous tongue ?’

Meanness, baseness, folly ; these are the very antipodes of a true man. Charles the Second is said to have been never so well pleased, as when a hole was picked in the reputation of a wise and eminently pious person.

This propensity sometimes exhibits itself even so

early as seven years of age. It is the parent of Obloquy ;—a miscreant, whose hovel one of the best of poets fixes in the neighbourhood of the London fish-market :—

‘ Hard by a sty, beneath a roof of thatch,  
Dwelt Obloquy, who, in her early days,  
Baskets of fish at Billingsgate did wash ;  
Cod, whiting, oyster, mackerel, sprat, or plaice ;  
There learn’d she speech from tongues that never cease.’

Many persons imagine themselves degraded by another’s reputation : for they fear but too rightly, when they fear that the excellences of others will cause their own vices, deficiencies, and deformities to be more rigidly examined.

Mirabeau gives an excellent canon of advice, in regard to detraction :—‘ Deal with it as with a wasp ;—  
‘ never attack it unless you are sure to destroy it, or it  
‘ will assail you again with increased exasperation and  
‘ greater force.’

## LXI.

## WHOSE ABUSE IS FATAL.

Most men resemble Addison’s maiden lady. They consider whatever happens to themselves as trials ; whatever happens to their neighbours as judgments. They look, on most occasions, through the wrong end of the telescope. Ever lenient to themselves, in some respects, too, they resemble those ancient Moors, who seized upon all strangers, and set them up as marks to aim their javelins at. The abuse of some, however,

is sufficiently harmless ; because they go too far. Thus Lucan, having, in his resentment to the memory of Cæsar, represented him as riding in triumph over the field of Pharsalia, the day after the battle, and glutting his sight with the spectacle of his enemies, and commanding them neither to be buried nor burnt ; the accusation being contrary not only to the policy, but to the character of the man, and in opposition, also, to all other accounts in history, the effect falls upon Lucan, rather than upon the person he condemns.

In public life, the more a really eminent man is abused, the greater is his influence, and the more effective is his power.

Some men's abuse, however, is sufficiently fatal. Thus Rufinus of Aquileia \* lost the fame he so eminently deserved, merely by the circumstance of having had St. Jerome for his adversary. He was too meek for the abuse of the worthy monk of Palestine, who assailed him, after an uninterrupted friendship of many years. The cause of this implacable hatred arose out of the regard, which Rufinus entertained for the writings of Origen †. In fact, St. Jerome as little deserved to be canonized, as either of the Scioppii. He resembled a puffin, as it were ; a bird, which has a large head only from the circumstance of its being puffed out with feathers.

\* The best account of this eminent presbyter is by Fontaninus. Hist. Lib. V. Aquileiensis, lib. v. p. 149.

† Ibid. p. 177.

## LXII.

## WHO TAKE PRAISE TO OTHERS AS CENSURE ON THEMSELVES.

SOME are as prone to accuse others of what they are guilty of themselves, as to any other vice whatever. Persons, living in the country, complain bitterly of this ; and, in revenge, practise it themselves with equal activity and malice. And were we to be heartily angry with every one, who follows the example, we might be angry with almost every man and woman we meet.

Men, too, are equally profuse in passing encomiums on the dead, when they think, in doing so, they can insult the living with impunity. ‘ I am happy, at all times, to see my neighbours whether in London or the country,’ said my friend, Orontes, the other day, as we were enjoying ourselves over a bottle of Burgundy—*he having produced it*. ‘ All I request of them is to talk of farming, manufacturing, mining, physic, law, even the art of making horseshoes ; provided they are silent in respect to their servants, their children, their neighbours, and their enemies. Every praise to another seems a disguised censure on themselves. They build a house, as it were of glass ; and, after satisfying their envy, by railing at every one about them, find their mansion peopled with those hated guests,—fear, distrust, malevolence, disappointed pride, and impotent ambition.’

What a hard fate it is to be obliged to contend for a subsistence among such worthless and ignoble persons as these !

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' Ah me ! methinks it were a happier fate  
To be no better than an humble swain !'

If some will allow no merit to those they hate, others will allow no charm to the places in which they live. Even Seneca was allied to these ; for while he was suffering banishment in Corsica, he would allow it nothing. It had no apples in autumn ; no harvests in summer ; no verdure in spring.

## LXIII.

## PREJUDICES IN RESPECT TO ANCIENT TIMES.

THERE is in all countries a prejudice which may be called perpetual. It may be learnt from a passage in Terence's ' Self-tormentor.'

' *Syrus.* Good sort of girl, this wench of Clinia.

*Chremes.* Ay, so she seems.

*Syrus.* And handsome.

*Chremes.* Well enough.

*Syrus.* *Not like the maids of old, but passable  
As girls go now.'*

The great advantage of Turenne, over the imperial general Montecuculi, is said to have consisted in having had a stronger and more active frame. This enabled him to inspect all the posts in person ; and, therefore, to take judicious measures on the spot for the execution of his designs. Strength, then, is necessary even in an age of cannon ; yet not so much so as in that when Alexander, on quitting India, erected twelve altars of square stone to remain as monuments of his

expedition; and caused beds of an extended size to be left, in order to deceive the natives as to the personal proportions of his men\*.

Reverence for ancient times reminds one of those castles in Spain, which associate ideas of dwarfs, giants, duennas, beautiful virgins, courteous knights, and brilliant tournaments. From this reverence arises the impression, that has, for so many ages, dwelt upon the more ignorant portion of mankind in regard to stature. Indeed some are so entirely determined in their resolution to allow no superiority to the living, that, like a celebrated Spanish (or Portuguese) poet, in allusion to cosmography, they would gravely assert, that America is fully described in the pages of Herodotus. This frailty is of old standing; for when Diomed throws a stone, Homer declares,

‘ Not two strong men th’ enormous weight could raise ;  
Such men as live in these degenerate days †.’

Virgil, in using this, improves the number to twelve :

‘ So vast, that twelve strong men of modern days  
Th’ enormous weight from earth could hardly raise ‡.’

Take a passage, also, from our excellent and agreeable friend Horace.

‘ *Damnosa quid non imminuit dies ?  
Ætas parentum, pejor avis, tulit  
Nos nequiores, mox daturos  
Progeniem vitiosiore.*’—Lib. iii., 6.

\* Quintus Curtius, l. ix., c. iii. † Iliad. v.

‡ Æn., xii., l. 899.

Augustin\* prolonged the cheat in his age, and Dryden in our own.

‘By chace our long-lived fathers earned their food :  
Toil strung their nerves, and purified their blood :  
But we, their sons, a pamper’d race of men,  
Are dwindled down to threescore years and ten.’

This idea, however, is finely corrected by one of the heroes of the Iliad.

‘What needs, O monarch, this invidious praise,  
Ourselves to lessen, while our sires you raise ?  
Dare to be just, Atrides ; and confess  
Our valour equal, though our fury less.’

Great power has generally been ascribed to size : but Livy assures us, that the Romans were the slightest men in all Italy ; insomuch, that the difference could be distinguished at the first glance : their superiority consisting not in their size but in their pride, their courage, their exercise, their tactics, their discipline, and their fear of their own officers.

Alexander was of a small stature, and a multitude of other heroes have been equally diminutive. Many great men in the time of Cromwell were so. Lord Clarendon says of Sir Charles Cavendish, that he was so small, that he attracted the eyes of every one ; yet he charged the enemy in all battles with a courage as

\* Thus he says, in reference to two bodies found under the pavement of a church at Milan : ‘*Invenimus miræ magnitudinis viros duos, ut prisca ætas ferebat.*’ On this subject refer to Audran’s ‘*Proportions du Corps Humain, &c.*,’ and De Bosse’s ‘*Figures Humaines mesurées sur des Antiques à Rome.*’ 1656.



keen as could dwell in the heart of man. As to Lord Falkland, the mirror of his times, he, too, was of diminutive stature, and still more unfavoured by nature; yet never lived there a man of more true courage, nor one more disposed to the accomplishment of great enterprises. Indeed, most *great* men (if we may be allowed to avail ourselves of a witticism) have been *little* ones\*.

FROM FORM TO MIND.

Many persons admire antiquity exceedingly: but then it is more to mortify the living, than to do justice to the dead.

\* Lucifer, however, is universally painted great. Zuccaro, in his pictures on the Cupola di Santa Maria, at Florence, makes him so large, that all the rest appear like children. Tasso says:—

‘Horrida maestà nel fero aspetto  
Terrore accresce, e più superbo il rende.’

Dante draws him large and horrible.

Un mostro straordinariamente grande et spaventoso.’

In another place;

‘E più con un gigante i’ mi convegno,  
Che i giganti non fan con le sue braccia, &c.’  
c. xxxiv., 30.

And Milton describes the same personage as large as

‘That sea beast,  
Leviathan, which God, of all his works,  
Created hugest, that swim the ocean stream.’

\* ‘Più io m’ accosto alla grandezza di un gigante, che non s’ accostino i giganti alla grandezza delle sole di lui braccia.’—*Angeli-lucci. Roma, 1741.*

‘*Ingeniis non ille favet plauditque sepultis ;  
Nostra sed impugnat, nos nostraque lividus odit.*’

*Horace.*

Bacon was one of the first to give a depth of wound to prejudices of this kind. Since which, prejudice has taken an opposite direction. We disdain our masters ; and having, in our voyage towards the pole, as it were, arrived at the eightieth degree of latitude, we think ourselves as wise,—better informed we certainly are,—than those who first had the sagacity to point us out the way.

Yet not always so. Hence dead men are celebrated ; and living ones are despised, on the ground that the good has been, the bad is, and the worst is still to come. Envy the living, we feel ourselves overwhelmed with their merit. But from the dead, as we have nothing to fear from their eminence, we are content to edify by their labours ; and that but too often without the least acknowledgment. We ought, however, to meditate on a remark of Mr. Locke\* ; viz. that ‘ we should make ‘ much greater progress in knowledge, were we to seek it ‘ in a consideration of things themselves, by making use ‘ of our own faculties than by perpetually calling in the ‘ aid of other persons.’ There is a medium, however, in these things ; for the knowing when to resort to other men’s judgments, and when to rely upon our own, is the great point in this argument. And here it were sacrilege not to remember a melancholy but true remark by Dugald Stewart : ‘ A great part of the life of ‘ a philosopher is devoted, not so much to the acqui-

\* Essay on Human Understanding, ch. iii., 65.

‘sition of new knowledge, as to unlearn the errors, to which he had been taught to give an implicit assent, before the dawn of reason and reflection.’

Happy will be the time when truths, moral, political, religious, and philosophic, are taught in our schools; and when the poor as well as the rich may walk, hand in hand, beneath the bowers of intelligence.

## LXIV.

WHO ARE EVER READY TO THROW THE BLAME OFF THEIR OWN SHOULDERS.

ELIZABETH threw the blame of the execution of the Duke of Norfolk on Lord Burleigh; and that of Mary, Queen of Scots, on her secretary, Davison. Nothing indeed is so convenient to a tyrant, whether male or female, as a scape-goat!

When men fail in their attempts, every one is to blame rather than themselves. Fortune or heaven are the general scape-goats; and on these are our ignorances, vices, and crimes universally laid.

‘I saw my shaft with aim unerring go,  
And deemed it sent him to the shades below.  
But still he lives. Some angry god withstands,  
Whose malice thwarts these unavailing hands.’

*Homer, Iliad. Wakefield.*

Men often affect disdain when their only feeling is fear. Metellus ridiculed Sertorius, and called him ‘fugitive’ and ‘outlaw.’ Yet he offered for the head


of this fugitive and outlaw no less than one hundred talents \* of silver and twenty thousand acres of land.

Some men are more courageous against tongues than they are against swords ; others more so against swords than tongues. When Edward VI. was constrained, by the repeated importunities of his ministers, to consent to the martyrdom of Joan of Kent, for entertaining some point of doctrine not esteemed orthodox, the king said to Cranmer, ‘ I submit, my lord of Canterbury, to ‘ sign this warrant ; but if there is any wrong, the ‘ blame must fall upon your grace’s head ;’ and the tears rolled down his cheeks as he spoke. This was beautifully said, since Edward was a boy ; but it would not have been beautifully said, had Edward been a man. He would then have laid commands upon the archbishop never to enter the council-chamber again.

When virtue flourishes and sails prosperously before the wind, most men are envious of it. The ship encounters a gale, which increases into a storm. It is blown from north to south, from east to west, at the caprice of the hurricane. It loses its pilot, and lastly its rudder ; no one flies to its assistance. It is seen to sink, deeper and deeper, every minute. At last, the waters rise over the deck ; a whirlpool is witnessed in the water ; and a mast only remains, like a spire, to tell the tale of misfortune. All, then, bewail the severity of the storm, and blame their associates for not affording a hand to save the devoted vessel.


Men may expect justice and liberality in the con-

\* Patercul., ii., 30. Flor., iii., c. 21.



struction of an enemy, and they will find them ; that is, in five persons out of fifty thousand. An evil occurs. It is caused by some one ; or perhaps twenty persons have occasioned it. All these twenty will resemble each other in this ; that they will endeavour, with the greatest industry, to throw the blame off their own shoulders ; and, to get it off, they will hurl it upon any one, even on a man in no way concerned. ‘ Come, ‘ unfortunate women,’ said Marie Antoinette, when at the monastery of the Feuillants ; ‘ come, and see one still ‘ more miserable than yourselves ; since she has been ‘ the cause of all your misfortunes. We are ruined ; ‘ we have arrived at that point to which they have been ‘ leading us, for these three years, through all possible ‘ outrages. We shall fall in this dreadful revolution ; ‘ and many others will perish after us. All have contributed to our downfall. The reformers have urged ‘ it like mad people ; and others, through ambition, for ‘ their own interest ; for the wildest Jacobin seeks ‘ wealth and distinction, and the mob is eager for plunder. There is not one lover of his country amongst ‘ this infamous horde ; the emigrant party have their ‘ intrigues and schemes ; foreigners seek to profit by ‘ the dissensions of France ; every one has had a share ‘ in our misfortunes.’

This is all true ; but not all that is true. Her majesty forgot the hand the king, and even herself, had in the fatal work, by being unfaithful to the constitution his majesty had sworn to respect. Had he regarded his oath, all, perhaps, had been well.



## LXV.

## WHO ARE ENAMOURED OF DEFORMITY.

WHEN we gaze on a drawing from Velasco of Pope Innocent X., we gaze on the ugliest man of his time; whose mistress was the most beautiful woman of her time; and by whose intrigues he was raised to the papacy. The original picture is in the Houghton collection, now at St. Petersburg.

Some women have so exquisite a taste, that they fall in love not only with fools, but with vulgarity of mind, and deformity of body: and this is the secret of the allegory of Venus visiting the workmen of Vulcan. Darwin has a fine passage; and with this we may illuminate our subject.

‘ Descending, Venus sought the dark abode,  
And soothed the labours of the grisly god.  
With radiant eye she view’d the boiling ore,  
Heard, undismay’d, the breathing bellows roar,  
Admired their sinewy arms, and shoulders bare,  
And ponderous hammers lifted high in air;  
With smiles celestial bless’d their dazzled sight,  
And beauty blazed amid infernal night.’

The poetry of Darwin is out of—fashion! I cannot, however, but think that, superior as he is to Aratus, Oppian, and Manilius, he is in many respects inferior to Lucretius only in point of antiquity. Has France, Germany, Italy, or Spain, any poet (in his line) to be placed in competition with him? Not one! He exhibits, indeed, some of the finest passages in human language.

## LXVI.

## WHO BELIEVE ALL MISFORTUNES TO BE FAULTS.

SOME there are, whose pity is susceptible of so strong an excitement, that they feel, as if they were ready to fall into the very misfortune, they see others labour under\*. Some, on the contrary, are so heartless, that they appear to have no conception, that any one can come to distress, but through the medium of their own indiscretion and desert. A very numerous description of men! many of the rich, for instance; and most of those, who are getting rich. And yet many of these are sorely disappointed, when a tale turns out to be not quite so bad, as that which was at first reported.

It is Montesquieu, I think, that observes that men, in excess of happiness, are ever inclinable to severity. Cruelty is, but too often, in fact, the associate of indolence and prosperity. Indeed, some of these persons remind us of the *Oura ou asson* of Brazil, which forms its nest of the bones of the animals it has killed. They exist; but they remain comparatively unknown, in the bosom of large societies: for the ambition of men, capable of great crimes, is so great, that it prevents them from wasting their strength, in committing small

\* ‘ It happeneth oftentimes, that wee take compassion of theyme, wee lous not: eyther for the malice wea beare theym, that offered the iniurye, or thoroughe believe, that the inured is condemned, rather by power of hys enemye, then his own offence.’—*The thirde Booke of Cardanus Comforte, published by commaundement of the Rt. Hon. the Earle of Dolmford.* 1573.

ones. They show themselves, therefore, only during periods of hazard and convulsion.

‘The fall of Napoleon,’ said a friend, the other day, ‘was a judgment upon him, and a righteous judgment.’ ‘And what was that which befel those he had conquered?’ ‘A judgment likewise.’ ‘Both?’ ‘Aye, both!’ ‘Solomon says, a like event happeneth to both; the righteous as well as the unrighteous.’ ‘The devil, you know, can also quote scripture for his purpose.’ ‘All I mean to convey is, that we ought to leave judgments to the decision of a superior power.’

## LXVII.

## LOVERS OF LOW COMPANY.

SAND, having no particles capable of fermentation, cannot contain those mucilaginous juices, which rich soils do; therefore cannot detain water long, though it does heat. Hence the deficiency of nutritious particles in sandy soils. With the latitude allowed to long similes, we may apply this to persons, attached to low company. The nutritious particles dry up. Drunkenness is its never-failing attendant; and drunkenness renders men either stupid, as in the arctic regions; or furious, as between the tropics; and hence few hopes can be wisely entertained of drinking men; since they,

‘As tinker-politicians do,  
In stopping one hole up, make two.’

Bad company may be compared to a rivulet in Spain, called the Tinto. This stream poisons all plants, till other rivulets run into it, and ameliorate its nature.



As to virtues and vices, they grow most luxuriantly in each other's neighbourhood like ericas, wins, bilberries, grass, and other herbaceous plants : but we can never associate virtues with native silver ; since native silver is found more frequently with arsenic than with any other metal.

There is an order of persons, who are never safe in respect to the knowledge they have of their friends, acquaintances, and neighbours. They have little discrimination themselves ; and the little they possess is lost in the faith they give to the idle, sycophantic miscreants, by whom they are surrounded :—miscreants, who even remind us of a passage in ' Darwin's Loves of the Plants.'

' If rests the traveller his weary head,  
Grim Mancinella haunts the mossy bed,  
Brews her black hebenon ; and stealing near,  
Pours the curst venom in his tortured ear.'

To mix with these is fatal.

#### LXVIII.

WHO STUDY DEFORMITY THE BETTER TO JUDGE OF  
BEAUTY.

' Whether it be a swan or goose,  
They level at. So shepherds use  
To set the same mark on the hip,  
Both of their sound and rotten sheep.'

To write truly is to write strongly ; nay severely. To write truly, we must examine closely ; to gain the knowledge of man, we must look narrowly into his worst




points:—but to suppose, that even bad men can be without good points is not only to calumniate them, but the whole of human nature.

It is necessary to study bad characters to have the power of valuing good ones; as Fletcher, Bishop of Arles, to acquire a beautiful style, and improve the purity of his taste, studied writers destitute of both. Attalus, king of Pergamus, cultivated aconite, hemlock, dorycnium, and other poisonous plants. Many of his subjects took umbrage at this. They called it an unnatural amusement. The wiser part, however, were sensible, that the king's object was merely addressed to the ascertainment of their properties and strength; that he might apply them afterwards as remedies.

By contemplating deformity, whether in art or in morals, we become more susceptible of the beauty of fine forms, and of just sentiments. Hence a wise man, rising from the investigation of error, becomes the more ardently a friend to truth, to liberty, and all the best affections of the heart. For, investigating the motives and actions of man is like untwisting a wreath, in which useful, beautiful, and poisonous flowers are fastened together by a leathern thong.

I have somewhere read a remark, I believe in Dr. Beattie's 'Essay on Poetry and Music,' implying, that it is to the crimes and vices of certain characters in the *Iliad*, *Æneid*, *Paradise Lost*, and many tragedies, that we are indebted for the greatest portion of the pleasure and profit, we derive from a perusal of those masterly performances.

Schiller has an excellent observation: 'a quick and



‘intimate relish for the beauty of virtue is universally understood to indicate a talent for virtue. On the other hand, no one hesitates to mistrust the heart of a man, whose head slowly and reluctantly comprehends moral beauty.’ If this be truth ;—and that it is, who shall have the hardihood to deny ?—it is evident, that the best parts of education are those, which have for their subjects, fine sentiments, noble actions, and the varied phenomena of the universe. ‘The thing I would ask of God,’ wrote Lord Shaftesbury to Mr. Locke\*, ‘should be to make men live up to what they know ; and that they might be so wise as to desire to know no other things, than what belong to them ; and to know those to the purpose.’

#### LXIX.

##### WHO JUDGE OTHERS BY THEMSELVES.

THIS most men do, whether for good or for evil. Indeed there is no small degree of truth in Dr. Hutcheson’s remark, that men have commonly the good, or the bad qualities, which they ascribe to mankind. Count Struensee†, prime minister of Denmark (after Count Bernstorff), justified his voluptuous life, and his carelessness as to the morals of the people, on the ground, that it belonged to the clergy to attend to the latter ; and that, judging the sentiments of the nation by his own, he imagined, that every one looked upon pleasure and an unrestrained life as the only happiness.

\* St. Giles, Sep. 29, 1694. King, p. 187. 4to.

† Hist. Conversion and Death of Count Struensee, p. 50.

Men are frequently more successful in disproving the assertions of an adversary, than they are in proving their own. In their estimates of virtue and vice, too, their candour, or their prejudice, mostly find echoes in their own bosoms. Let them, however, beware of applying microscopes to vices, or follies, or crimes ; to talents, genius, knowledge, or virtue. Let every man, and every object, be judged of through the medium of a correct microscopic measurement ; neither pointed too high, nor dipped too low ; but equal. There must be no refraction of the atmosphere, as it were. For refraction is insensible only at the zenith. As the sun declines it increases ; till arriving near the limit of the horizon,

‘ Each lengthening shadow to a giant spreads.’

## LXX.

WHO ARE UNABLE TO ESTIMATE THE TIMES IN WHICH  
THEY LIVE.

‘ The fullness and continuance of a blessing  
Doth make us senseless of the good :  
And, if it some time fly not our possessing,  
The sweetness of it is not understood.’

*Wüher.—Emblems.*

EVERY age has its peculiar pleasures and pains, spirit and customs, virtues and vices. In early youth manhood is the paradise of futurity ; in manhood and age youth is the paradise of regret. Nothing valuable is present ; and as we grow older, even Nature herself seems to degenerate.

‘ Le temps, qui change tout, change aussi nos humeurs :  
Chaque âge a ses plaisirs, son esprit et ses mœurs.’

*Boileau, Art Poet. Chant III.*

Aurelio Brandolini celebrated the age of Lorenzo de’ Medici after the following manner :—

———— ‘ Cuncta beatus habes,  
O fortunatos homines, O sæpe beata  
Sæcula, quæ tanto digna fuere viro.’

Men, however, seldom praise the age they live in, at the expense of the past. The path leads, in general, quite the contrary way. The Mennesinger, therefore, who laments the degeneracy of his age, and laments that of the past, is the poet of human nature, rather than that of a city, town, village, or house\*.

Men are ever complaining of the excellence of the times in which they were boys: and they insist, that every thing is altered for the worse. Whence arises this? from the circumstance, that life has lost its greenness and its blossom. Hope cannot cheat so easily, as she was wont: disappointment has opened our eyes; age has succeeded to vigorous manhood; every thing is discoloured; and the blood circulates coldly. No—no! the times are better; and we are worse. Modern writers, however, are less attractive;


\* ‘ Do man der rechten minne pflag  
Da pflag man ouch der ehren;  
Nu mag mau naht und tag  
Die bösen sitte leren :  
Swer dis nu siht, und jeus do sach,  
O we! was der nu clagen mag  
Tugende wend sich nu verkeren !’

*Henry of Veldig.*

probably from the circumstance, that when they begin to write, they feel almost weighed down by the vast mass of their materials.

This is, certainly, an age of licence, frippery, and enlightenment; of real, affected, and of false refinement. Other ages may have been equally so, as those of the Persians, Babylonians, Greeks, and imperial Romans; but of those we only read; whereas of this we know. We worship novelty, too, as some nations worshipped the wind. With these drawbacks, I am inclined to believe, that the age we live in is better than any age preceding; if we except certain short periods between the calamities of Rome and Greece. Neither can we attribute to the present age, except in some few instances, the moral of La Fontaine's fable, respecting animals, ill of the plague; who all preferred their several accusations; the result of which was, that the wolves, the bears, and the lions, were pardoned; but a poor innocent sheep was sacrificed, because he had eaten a small portion of grass.

This age, perhaps, is deficient in strength. That we have not so sound a regard for liberty, as our fathers in the reigns of James, Charles, William, Anne, and George I., is, perhaps, certain; but this may be attributed, in a great measure, to our being in possession of liberty from our infancy; and to the distrust, with which the public listen to the professions of public men, since the coalition of Mr. Fox with Lord North. As it is, fortunate is it for us, that 'our fathers lived before us.' For, had they not erected the constitution, we, assuredly,



could never have erected it for ourselves ; we, who can do almost all things except frame a plain, practical act of parliament, without blemish or spot.

In respect to rewards, perhaps there never was a time, when the field was so fairly open to talent ; (though not to genius ; ) and where virtue was so sure of a certain species of favour ; and industry of reward.

‘ Hic patet ingeniis campus : certusque merenti  
Stat favor ; ornatur propriis industria donis.’

*Claudian.*

Patriotism, however, is not much in request. The public virtues are dying ; but the private and domestic ones flourish more than ever. The patriot, therefore, must look for reward no where, but in the sanctuary of his own bosom ; in which respect we may apply a passage in Horace ; for most men argue thus—‘ where is ‘ the satisfaction of beholding a magnificent road before ‘ us, well lighted, and well watched ; if we feel assured, ‘ that it leads us to the spot, whither it is not our pecuniary interest, and, therefore, not our inclination, to ‘ go ?’

#### LXXI.

WHO WILL PERMIT NO ONE TO BE A PROPHET IN HIS OWN COUNTRY.

PASSING a field of beans, yesterday, it came into my head that ‘ no one is a prophet in his own country.’

A field of beans,—why, it is only a field of beans !—therefore unheeded ; yet Thomson poetically sings—



————— 'Arabia cannot boast  
A fuller gale of joy.'

The Indus, for a multitude of ages, was regarded by the natives on its banks only as a river having little comparative distinction. It has lately been discovered to be a longer river than the Ganges; and to discharge nearly as many cubic feet of water in the dry season as the Mississippi\*.

Many men (in the country) are valued much after the same manner. They have talent and virtue; but, living amongst us, who allows the one; and who celebrates the other?

A great authority has assured us, that no one is a prophet in his own country.

There are several reasons for this. Envy and jealousy, on the part of observers; their acuteness and knowledge of the prophet; and the folly and presumption of the prophet himself. Men hate eminence; and despise those, who presume to be more skilled than themselves. Besides—no hero is always a hero; and a valet never is one.

The senate at Rome occasionally disgraced itself in a manner, associating with this. Its members were men, belonging to the first families; and yet we are assured by Paterculus†, that they listened with much greater complacency to those whose motives might be suspected, than to those whose wisdom and virtue no one could doubt.

\* Eighty thousand cubic feet in a second. The Ganges only twenty-one thousand five hundred.


† Lib. ii., c. xiii.



When young, Titian painted so that his pictures might be seen at a distance or near ; when old, all his works required distance. We may apply this, in certain cases, to our knowledge of man. And this reminds me of what has been said of Nicholas Poussin ; viz. that he lived so long with ancient statues, that he might be said to have been better acquainted with statues than men.

The Ganges was known to Europeans at a much later period than the Indus ; yet it required more than two thousand years to ascertain that the length of the Indus, as I have just now said, is much greater than that of the Ganges. Thus is it of man. We appreciate those soonest whom we have known but a short time ; —a curious circumstance ; since most men resemble those seeds, in which, if nicely examined, we may discover the radicle, the plume, and the organ of nourishment.

Even Kepler, during his life, was but little appreciated. Descartes never once mentions him. It required a Newton to estimate his value. In more recent times, more than one philosopher has been fated to assert, that it is necessary sometimes to go abroad, to preserve self-esteem. At home they are buried.




## LXXII.

## JUDGING OF MEN.

PROFESSOR Stewart has said, that without the union of the two powers of reflection and observation, the study of man can never be prosecuted with success. Certainly not. Without these, men are seen only as shadows, sketched upon walls through the medium of a magic lantern; or as reflections on the ripples of waters. And here it is necessary to remember, that, in magnifying or diminishing objects, we are compelled to the necessity of magnifying or diminishing the medium, also, through which they are seen. It is important, too, to remember, that virtues are more simple and clearer to be observed than crimes or vices; since virtues reflect with less complication, and bear tests with steadier endurance; as fixed stars of a blue character best bear the illumination of a telescope. We may also make another remark; viz., that those, who have been some time in solitude, frequently judge men better than those who are continually moving in the circle of life; as those, who have been some time in the dark, see better in the dark than those, who have but recently come out of the light.


Some one has observed, that ‘the book of nature is open to all; and that in her pages there are no new readings.’ This is not true; since every reading depends upon the person that is reads. Every thing in nature is beautiful; but this beauty is observable only in proportion to the mind observing. Men in general hate and love; but there are some by whom no order of men



is hated or despised. They see pearls in every one; and why? because they have sufficient discrimination to select them from the ordure by which they are surrounded and defiled.

Most critics judge of others with no better data on which to found their decisions, than those on which Lavater judged Raffaele's portraits. He pronounced them deficient in truth, in correctness of design, and in natural expression. Yet Lavater never saw even so much as one portrait of Raffaele's painting in all his life. He formed his opinion merely from prints, sold at Berne, Zurich, Geneva, Paris, and Vienna. Now, how little these are to be trusted may be imagined, when I state, that I have myself seen more than twenty drawings of St. John and Jesus by Raffaele, none of which resemble the others. They are all various. Living men are not to be judged by dead portraits. 'Compare my account of the *Melianthus*,' wrote Dillenius to Linnæus\*, 'with yours; which you describe as 'if you had seen it, though indeed not fresh; and you 'will allow, that there is a great difference between the 'examination of a living and a dead subject. This 'makes me wonder at your having admitted into your 'genera so many Indian plants, which you have never 'seen, and which, perhaps, are never likely to be seen.' Though Dillenius was here too critical on Linnæus; yet the passage may be applied to the manner in which many men judge others. It may, therefore, be reflected upon with advantage.

\* May 16, 1737.



It is good;—nay it is indispensable to a correct judgment,—to see with our own eyes. But our own eyes are not sufficient. We must see through the medium of other eyes also. And though there are many, who accustom themselves to rest satisfied with judgments pronounced by others, yet it is certain that even those, who look chiefly through other men's spectacles, may, by the application of a strong and steady mind, not only exhibit, as M. Von Buch says of Reimaruss' small work on De Luc's Theory of the Earth, 'new and peculiar prospects;' but be able to trace truth through all the labyrinths of error, with much greater exactitude than those who confine themselves only to their own optics. For when we see only through our own media, we see things only to the best of one man's vision; whereas, if we take advantage of those of other men also,—more especially those of eminent men,—we bring the experience of multitudes to our assistance. And here it may not be without point to remark, that if transparent bodies transmit light of one colour, and reflect light of another, as they sometimes do; we should remember, at the same time, that very important discovery, to which we owe the invention of the achromatic telescope; proving that some kinds of glass separate the rays of different colours from each other much more than others; while the whole deviation, produced by the pencil of light, is exactly the same.

Men's minds must of necessity be incomplete, since their organs are so. Their eyes are directed forwards. They cannot see on both sides at the same time, as cameleons and most quadrupeds do; nor can they look behind them, like spiders. They can have, therefore,

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a minute knowledge but of few things ; and but few can have ready methods of bringing the whole of what they may know into action on every occasion. The more constant and diligent our search, the greater, of course, is our accuracy in contemplating variety ; and the mind being thence preserved from confusion in taking surveys of a multitude of individuals, it acquires, after a time, the faculty of generalizing results, in the midst of a labyrinth of forms and deep complexities of association.

## LXXIII.

WHO ARE KNOWN BY THE TITLES OF THEIR WORKS.

THERE must, I should suppose, have been something exceedingly agreeable in the character of the old poet Gascoigne, or he could not have composed such a title as this :—‘ A hundreth sundrie flowres, bound up  
‘ in one small poesie ; gathered partely in the fyne out-  
‘ landish gardins of Euripedes, Ovid, Petrarke, Ariosto,  
‘ and others, and partly by invention out of our owne  
‘ fruitfull orchardes in Englande ; yelding sundrie  
‘ sweet sauors of tragical, comicall, and moral dis-  
‘ courses, both pleasaunt and profitable to the well-  
‘ smellyng noses of learned readers \*.’

Taylor, the water-poet, was so much distinguished by his titles, that his merit is said chiefly to have consisted in them. I send you two. ‘ Three weekes, three  
‘ daies, and three houres obseruation and travel from  
‘ London to Hamborghe in Germanie.’ ‘ An errante  
‘ thiefe, whom every man may truste.’

\* 4to., 1572

As to Molineux, it is sufficient to read the title to one of his books to know, not only what he was in himself, but what opinion he had of the Being who made him. ‘*Pensées sur le Nombre des Eleus ; or, Moral Reflections upon the Number of the Elect ; plainly proving from scripture evidence, that not one in one hundred thousand,—nay, probably not one in one million, from Adam to our times,—shall be saved\*.*’

Many more might be mentioned ; but the preceding instances are ample to the purpose.

## LXXIV.

WHO PRAISE THE PLACES IN WHICH THEY ARE NOT.

‘*Possession, why more tasteless than pursuit?*’—*Young.*

Soon after Dr. Goodenough was raised to the bishopric of Durham, he wrote thus to Sir James Smith :—‘*I long to show you Rose Castle : whether it be a paradise or not, every one’s mind must determine :—Satan could not find a paradise in the garden of Eden.*’ Three months after—‘*This place gains upon me exceedingly. I view it with delight.*

‘*Mens expleri nequit, ardescitque tuenda.*’

Some bishops have not lived at Rose Castle three months without a fever of desire for translations to Winchester, Durham, London, or Canterbury.

‘*Ev’n while perfection lies within our arms,  
We stray in thought, and sigh for other charms.*’

\* 4to., 1680.

How many persons do we all know, who resemble Petrarch, as described by Zimmerman : ‘ Displeased ‘ because he was not where he could not go, because he ‘ could not obtain every thing he wished, and because ‘ he looked in vain for something it was impossible to ‘ find.’

One day, conversing with an officer, who superintended a martello tower, then building on the coast of Sussex : ‘ Sir,’ said the officer, in answer to my question, how he liked his situation, ‘ I would rather be in ‘ the deserts of Arabia than in this miserable place. I ‘ have been in all quarters of the world, but I declare ‘ to you, sir, as a man of honour and a gentleman, that ‘ the heats of Hindostan and the snows of Canada are ‘ preferable to the monotony of this inconceivable place ! ‘ If I would drink a bottle of wine, there is nobody to ‘ drink a bottle of wine with. Indeed, dulness eats, ‘ drinks, and sleeps in the centre of these walls ; the ‘ fosse is a circular grave ; the drawbridge leads, as it ‘ were, to the hole of Calcutta ; and set me down for a ‘ kite, if I would not rather be a mouse or a ring-ouzele, ‘ than spend three months more in such a pestilent ‘ place as this. What I am to do in the winter, Heaven ‘ only knows ! I wish to the Lord I was once more in ‘ the back settlements of Canada !’

Things are frequently to the mind as cinchona is to the stomach. One small event has, occasionally, greater influence on our happiness than twenty others, let them be ever so large. So in respect to cinchona ; out of sixty grains, one grain has an equal, if not superior, influence to that of the whole original quantity\*.

\* Med. Chir. Rev., Jan. 1826.

The rich live, as it were, too much on the contemplation of their diamonds ; but let us illustrate what we would say by a passage from the poets :

‘ Tamar! thy pastures, large and rich, afford  
Flowers to thy bees, and herbage to thy sheep ;  
But, batten’d on too much, the poorest croft  
Of thy poor neighbour yields what thine denies\*.’

Some are always praising the past, and condemning the present ; others, as I said before, are never happy in the place they chance to be. The last town, city, or country is the place for them. And this reminds me of Pilatus and the poet of the Seasons. ‘ Discontented with the world ‘ and with himself,’ says Gibbon† in relation to Leo Pilatus, ‘ he depreciated his present enjoyments, while ‘ absent persons and objects were dear to his imagination. In Italy, he was a Thessalian ; in Greece, a ‘ native of Calabria ; in the company of the Latins, he ‘ disclaimed their language, religion, and manners : but ‘ no sooner was he landed at Constantinople, than he ‘ again sighed for the wealth of Venice and the elegance ‘ of Florence.’ ‘ That enthusiasm,’ said Thomson in a letter from Rome to Lord Melcombe, ‘ which I had ‘ upon me with regard to travelling, goes off, I find, very ‘ fast. One may imagine fine things in reading ancient ‘ authors, but to travel is to dissipate the vision. A ‘ great many antique statues (where several of the fair ‘ ideas of Greece are fixed for ever in marble) and the ‘ paintings of the first masters, are indeed most enchanting objects. How little, however, of these suffices ! ‘ How unessential are they to life !’

\* Gebir.

† Gibbon, xii., 125.



There are some scenes, however, so delightful to elegant men, that it were impossible to love any half so well ; and to these Bowles alludes in the following passage :—

‘ Fair scenes, ye lend a pleasure, long unknown  
To him who passes weary on his way ;  
The farewell tear, which now he turns to pay,  
Shall thank you ; and whene’er of pleasures flown  
His heart some long-lost image would renew,  
Delightful haunts ! he will remember you.’

The feeling, alluded to just now, extends even to the appreciation of men. In England a man of this kind talks of Frenchmen ; in France, of Germans ; in Germany, of the Swiss ; and when in Switzerland, perhaps, he will love to dwell upon the superiority of an Italian, a Spaniard, or a Portuguese. If some feel perpetually discontented with what they see, others, as idly, give splendour even to the solitude of deserts. ‘ Sweet ‘ are the songs of Egypt on paper,’ said Ledyard\*. ‘ Who is not ravished with gums, palms, dates, figs, ‘ pomegranates, circassia, and sycamores, without re- ‘ collecting that amidst these are dust, hot and fainting ‘ winds, bugs, mosquitoes, spiders, flies, leprosy, fevers, ‘ and almost total blindness?’ Let those travel to Egypt, then, who cannot exist without seeing monuments, erected by Tyranny to the frantic demon of Superstition.

Some of the lower classes at Venice value the houses and streets in which they live so highly, that they have never seen the square of St. Mark. ‘ A horse ‘ or a tree,’ says Madame de Stael, ‘ would be truly

\* Life and Travels of Ledyard, p. 404.

‘wonderful phenomena.’ There are, also, thousands in London who never saw Westminster Abbey.

To blame the present and admire the past is an error in the education of most. To traverse distant regions, and neglect the land of our birth, is equally characteristic. Thousands visit the Alps and Pyrenees, who would not give one single marvedi to see the plain of Perth, the residence of the Lady of the Lake, the woods and rocks of Westmoreland, or the imprisoned paradise of Nant-Frangon.

## LXXV.

WHO THINK NOTHING WORTH HAVING THEY HAVE NOT.

‘Before I die I cast you from me.  
Lie there and perish : I am rid of you :  
Or deck the splendid ruin of some other.’

*Æschylus ; Agamemnon. Potter.*

THUS do many men act by their friends ; and some, following the example of Faulconbridge, rail at that which is farthest from their reach, or the farthest from their state.

‘Whiles I’m a beggar I will rail,  
And say, there is no sin but to be rich ;  
And being rich, my virtue then shall be  
To say, there is no vice but beggary.’

*King John, act ii., sc. 2.*

Hence arises the lamentable circumstance, that all men, as Young has it, are

‘For ever on the brink of being born.’

The passage from ‘King John’ reminds me of another, equally eloquent of sense, in a poem called the ‘New Morisco’ (published in 1600).

'When his purse is swolne but sixpence bigge,  
 Why then he sweares, "Now, by the Lorde, I thinke  
 All beere in Europe is not worth a figge;  
 A cuppe of clarette is the only drinke."  
 And thus his praise from beere to wine dothe goe,  
 E'en as his purse in pence dothe ebbe and flowe.'

Yet I could never despise the conduct of the fox in regard to the grapes. Most persons laugh at poor Reynard: but I esteem him one of the wisest of men who regards all fruits sour he cannot obtain. A French poet, therefore, has a passage very congenial to my taste, where he hints, that nothing is worth having that is not in our own possession.

'Pour m'assurer le seul bien  
 Que l'on doit estimer au monde,  
 Tout ce que je n'ai pas, je le compte pour rien.'

The late William Windham said, very justly, to Mr. Boswell, that we are more uneasy from thinking of our wants, than happy in thinking of our acquisitions; and this remark reminds me of what Lord Clarendon says\* of Weston, Earl of Portland:—'He took more pains of inquiring into other men's affairs than in the discharge of his own; and not so much joy in what he had as trouble and agony in what he had not.'

It was an awful time for the Trojan, when Venus removed the film from his eyes, and addressed him after the following manner:—

'Adspice: namque omnem, quæ nunc obducta tuenti  
 Mortales hebetat visus tibi et humida circum  
 Caligat, nitem eripiam.'

\* Vol. i., p. 47.

## LXXVI.

## AUTHORS, JUDGED OF FROM THEIR HEROES.

SOME critics have assimilated authors with the heroes they have drawn. It has been very much the fashion, for instance, to do so with Lord Byron; and if they are guilty of injustice, it must be confessed, that the poet himself contributed largely to their mistake.

Shall Milton be associated with his Satan? Shakspeare with his Richard? or Crebillon with his displays? In one of his tragedies a father destroys a son\*; in a second the father drinks the blood of his son†; in a third a son assassinates a mother‡. To suppose that Crebillon should be a blood-thirsty person for these unhallowed displays would be not only unjust, but absurd to the last degree.

## LXXVII.

## WHO VALUE NOTHING TILL IT IS LOST.

‘Mark of what delusive worth  
The fleeting things for which we sigh,  
Satisfied never :  
For in this vain, deceitful, earth,  
We lose them e’en before we die;  
Yes ! lose for ever.’

*Maurique.—Bowring.*

WHO speaks, or even thinks, of the cuckoo-pink §? yet the structure of its blossom is, perhaps, the most wonderful of all British plants. Saintfoin is indi-

\* Rhadamistus.

† Atreus.

‡ Electra.

§ Arum maculatum.

genous ; and what grass more valuable ? Yet it was not cultivated by the farmer till the middle of the seventeenth century ; and then it was introduced from France and Flanders. Men often value that but little, which is perpetually under their eyes ; till some stranger points out its excellence. It is thus frequently of people, in respect to kings. Under the tyranny of his successor, Charles, the Neapolitans became sensible of what they had lost in Manfred. ‘ O Rex Manfrede !’ they exclaimed ; ‘ te met non cognovimus, quem nunc ‘ et ter etiam deploramus \*.’

—— ‘ Not to understand a treasure’s worth,  
Till time has stolen away the slighted good,  
Is cause of half the poverty we feel,  
And makes the world the wilderness it is.’

*Cowper.—Winter’s Walk at Noon.*

Fortune, fickle and blind as she is represented, may, as far as I can tell, have much more judgment than we suppose : for the evils she lays upon us are, for the most part, just those which we are the best able to bear ; and we are, in return, wise enough to value that good most, which is the most distant from our reach. What says Lucretius ?

—— ‘ Dum abest quod avemus, id exuperare videtur,  
Cætera, post aliud cum contigit illud avemus :  
Et sitis æqua tenet †.’

There is such a wayward nature in us all, that were I commissioned to adjudge the punishment, most fre-

\* Giannone ; Hist. Civile Regno di Napoli, xix. c. 4.

† De Rer. Nat. iii. See also Horace, ‘ Virtutem incolumen ‘ odimus,’ &c., iii. Od. 24.

quently deserved, it should consist in a man's being drawn up to the ceiling in a basket, there to sit, the ridicule of all, hungry and thirsty; while others, more deserving, are eating and drinking in sober merriment:—and this as a punishment, not for crimes, but for the tasteless impertinence of never valuing any thing till it be lost.

We value nothing at its true price, I say, that is not beyond our reach; nor even that; for that we over-value. Tell us, in the first instance, that we can have Joan the beautiful; and, as a reward for the information, we instantly prefer the sister of Joan, who being beyond our reach, we are miserable. Women are equally profound. Beaumont and Fletcher, however, are rather too unmeasured in their thoughts.

'On men with pleasure, till they find the way  
To give us a neglect; and then they, too late,  
Perceive the loss of what they might have had,  
And dote till death.'

Thus, too, in Shakspeare:—

'When he shall hear, she died upon his words,  
The idea of her love shall sweetly creep  
Into the study of imagination;  
And every lovely organ of her life  
Shall come apparelled in more precious habit;  
More moving, delicate, and full of life,  
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,  
Than when she lived indeed \*.'

Even our country we do not sufficiently appreciate,

\* *Much Ado about Nothing*. See also *Second Part of Henry IV.* act 1, sc. 3, l. 583.

till the time of misfortune occurs in another. Then, with Coriolanus, we can do justice not only to its history, but even to its climate and manners.

Sept. 16, 1827.—Stretched on the bed of sickness! For many weeks have I not been able to turn in my bed. When I could walk, I valued the faculty as nothing: all men could walk. Privation, at length, has given the zeal and the zest. One slight walk, now, were worth a thousand pounds.

‘The common sun, the air, the skies  
To me were opening paradise!’

#### LXXVIII.

WHO ARE NOT TO BE DECEIVED BY FINE QUALITIES.

SWIFT affirms, and with no small share of truth, that all sublunary happiness consists in being well deceived. For my own part, I long wished to have the truth opened to me, as Venus drew the cloud from her son\*, or as Michael purged the visual nerve of Adam†.

Some truths, however, are melancholy to know, in a state of imperfection; surrounded, as we all are, by hostile interests; and kept from the knowledge of other truths which, if known, would harmonize the rest. This obscuration of truths operates like refraction; for, were there no refraction of the atmosphere, we should see the stars by day as well as by night.

Franklin said, that the best public measures are not adopted from previous wisdom, but forced by the

\* *Æneid* ii. 605.

† *Par. Lost*, xi. 411.

occasion. This is certain: for we can judge men's designs, better than the motives which engendered them. The second William Pitt's fine qualities never deceived Marcello into an approval of his system and machinery. Nor did Fox's declamations in favour of liberty conceal from him, that he was not only born, but that he always felt as an aristocrat. Burke's chivalry never took his eyes from his pension; Napoleon's fortune never dazzled him into the hope that he would prove an Epaminondas, a Tiberius the Second, or a Washington; nor did the moderation of Alexander, at the peace of Fontainebleau, induce him one moment to believe that he was five degrees removed from a despot. He permitted his father's murderers to escape the punishment they deserved; and was, therefore, of necessity, compelled to do something with which to gild the ignominy of his clemency. Brilliancy of action being beyond his capacity, he sought refuge in moderation. The moon of Attica was, in the opinion of the Athenians, a much finer moon than that which rose over the plains of Thessaly, the bay of Tarentum, or the gulf of Salonica.

## LXXIX.

## PALLIATORS.

CAVES, formed in rocks by the restless turbulence of the ocean, when left dry by the secession of the waves, often become shelters for the use of every noxious animal. Such is the case in respect to political hurricanes; since the worst men, at those times, receive the most effective shelter, and the highest rewards.




Some historians are great Palliators. Hume, for instance, palliates the conduct and administration of Edward II., and Richard II.; and he enters largely into the tyranny of the Tudors; seemingly, it has been thought, for the express purpose of extenuating that of the Stuarts. As to his history of Charles I., it is a party production altogether.

William Pitt, that is, the second William Pitt, was a great Palliator; insomuch, that, though of a high mind, personally, he defended almost every public delinquent, during the long period of his administration.

During the early stage of the French revolution, Reubel was the constant protector of men accused of plunder and dilapidation; Barras, of attainted and ruined nobles; and Revelliere, of unprincipled priests.

Some things are esteemed for their intrinsic value; some for the associations with which they are connected; and others for being specimens of art, genius, or labour. Thus a nobleman admits the portrait of a person to hang in his cabinet for years, whom he would not permit (*vivo*) to come into his presence for a moment. An assassin, for instance. It is the work, and not the man. Sometimes it is not the deed, but the motive; sometimes the man or the deed, and not the motive.

Men are frequently lenient,—exceedingly lenient,—to the faults of others, when they have never suffered from the like; and are in no dread of suffering from the future: but the moment they fear;—the unholy difference!



## LXXX.

WHO ACCUSE OTHERS OF WHAT THEY ARE GUILTY OF  
THEMSELVES.

' 'Tis but my duty to redress the wrongs  
That we have caus'd; unless, perhaps, you took me  
For one of those who, having injured you,  
Term fair expostulation an affront;  
And, having first offended, are the first  
To turn accusers.'—*Terence; The Brothers; Colman.*

THERE is such a jealous and mortified spirit among men, that if a person does a thing once, he is not unfrequently accused of doing it always. Thus, if he lie in bed till ten in the morning once or twice, his neighbours will immediately convert it into a habit; and it is ten to one but he will have a character for indolence, which he will be some time in clearing away.

How often, also, do we accuse others of what we are guilty of ourselves\*! 'To hear Cethegus accuse Cati-line,' says Juvenal, 'would be almost enough to draw 'the planets from the spheres.' Indeed, when I hear men accuse their fellows, pertinaciously, of prejudice, ill humour, or of any other fault,—unless I know expressly to the contrary,—I am rather apt to believe the accusers too guilty of those vices themselves; and yet,—in their own opinions at least,—they are men of an exceedingly nice discernment!

\* 'Thou art inexcusable, O man,' says St. Paul, 'whoever thou art, that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: for thou, that judgest, doest the same things.'—*Romans*, ch. ii., v. 1.


‘In Fox,’ said Napoleon, ‘the heart warmed the genius; in Pitt, the genius withered the heart.’ How applicable was the last sentence to the speaker himself!

‘Change but the name, the tale is told of you.’

Livy accuses Hannibal of ‘inhuman cruelty,’ and more than ‘Carthaginian treachery;’ of having ‘no respect for truth or honour;’ ‘no fear of the gods;’ ‘no regard for the sanctity of oaths;’ and ‘no sense of religion.’ Whether Hannibal was, indeed, a martyr to all these bad qualities, I know not. I much suspect that he was not. But one thing is certain; viz., that, were he guilty of them to ever so great an extent, his enemies had them in as great, if not in a greater. It is much to be lamented that the history of the Carthaginians is known chiefly—indeed, as I have said before, almost only,—through the medium of their enemies.

Hannibal could both command and obey. He had not pertinacity of design: but, what genius! what resources! Nor would he permit himself to feel that there were such things as doubt, or difficulty, or danger. He had both courage and stratagem; nor would he hesitate about any thing but a declaration of peace with those whom he felt to be his country’s most effective and inveterate enemies.

Could any thing have been more ludicrous than to have heard Cromwell accuse Charles I. of being a hypocrite? One day, finding the ‘Eikon’ on the table of Lady Wenwood, Cromwell exclaimed, ‘You, I see, madam, you have Charles Stuart’s book in your keeping.’ ‘Yes, my lord Protector,’ answered Lady



Wenwood ; ‘ but do you believe he wrote it ? ’ ‘ To be sure I do,’ answered Cromwell ; ‘ do I not know him ‘ to have been a perfect hypocrite ? ’

Look, too, at the conduct of Cromwell’s clergymen\*.

It is curious to observe how mankind are led, from generation to generation, by garbled statements, unjust accusations, and puerile prejudices ! Thus the reign of Mary the Bigot is stigmatized, and justly, for the enormity of religious persecutions. She is, therefore, almost universally believed to have united the three pestilent vices of avarice, pride, and revenge ; chastened only by the affection which she entertained for a worthless husband. During her reign two hundred and seventy-seven persons died at the stake ; but it ought not to be forgotten, that if Mary was attached to the stake, Elizabeth seems to have been almost equally attached to the halter ; for in her reign one hundred and sixty-eight persons were executed for being priests, for harbouring priests, or for being converts. Two Dutchmen were also burnt in Smithfield for being anabaptists †.

\* ‘ The most part of them (divines) were such as had preached ‘ and cried down, with great show of zeal, the avarice and pluralities of bishops and prelates ; yet these conscientious men (ere ‘ any part of the work done for which they came together, and ‘ that on public salary) wanted not boldness, to the ignominy and ‘ scandal of their pastor-like profession, to seize into their hands, ‘ or willingly accept (besides one, sometimes two or more, of the ‘ best livings), collegiate masterships in the universities, rich lectures in the city, setting sail to all winds that might blow gain ‘ into their covetous bosoms.’—*Milton, Character of the Long Parliament*, 1681, pp. 5, 6.

† Bishop Challoner assures us, that nearly as many suffered from the first year of James I. to the last of Charles II.

Can we forget the reasoning of Izarn, in his dispute with one of the Albigenes?

‘As you declare you won’t *believe*, ’tis fit that you should burn;  
And as your fellows have been burnt, that you should blaze in  
turn\*.

And as you’ve disobey’d the will of God and of St. Paul,  
Which ne’er was found within your heart, nor pass’d your teeth  
at all,

The fire is lit, the pitch is hot, and ready is the stake,  
That through these tortures, for your sins, your passage you  
may take.’

## LXXXI.

## WHO APPRECIATE MALICIOUSLY.

‘So, roll’d up in his den, the swelling snake  
Beholds the traveller approach the brake;  
When, fed with noxious herbs, his turbid veins  
Have gather’d half the poisons of the plains.’

*Homer, Iliad; Pope.*

THIS is a motto which might have been adopted with felicity by her imperial majesty, Maria Theresa; the difference being often

‘As great between  
The optics seeing, as the object seen.’

‘The English are almost all deists, infidels, and free-thinkers,’ said her majesty to her husband, the Emperor, and her youngest son the Archduke Maximilian, when they were about to visit France and the Netherlands. ‘Go not over to that country: I tremble lest any intercourse with such a nation should contami-

\* ‘E s’aquest no vols creyre vec t’el foc arzerat  
Che art tos companhos,’ &c. &c.

*Vide Sismondi, i., 227.*

‘nate your manners, and shake your belief in every  
‘thing sacred among Christians.’

In some, the badness of their judgments corrupts their hearts; in others, the badness of their hearts corrupts their judgments. Richard II. and Charles I. were exemplars of the former; Richard III. and Philip II. of Spain examples of the latter.

Man is often the creature of involuntary circumstances; but, occasionally, his baseness seems almost to have a radicle, founded in something beyond the power of circumstances; it appears innate; and, as an example of this, I shall cite what the author of a book, entitled ‘Bibliomania,’ says of a person whom he stigmatizes by the title of Sycorax. ‘Censure to him was sweeter than  
‘praise; and the more elevated the rank and respectable  
‘the character, the more dexterously he aimed his blows,  
‘and the more frequently he renewed his attacks.’ This is said of one clergyman by another of the same cloth.

The advice of Pietro da Cortona is worthy of being extensively considered. ‘Go, go your ways,’ said he to Pietro Testa, who thought to excel, and therefore criticised the works of his master: ‘Go, go your ways;  
‘leave criticising to those who are grown old in the  
‘profession; who speak with a white beard, and a  
‘tongue well instructed by continual study and long  
‘experience. Spend that time, which criticising consumes, in working; and when you shall perceive that  
‘the more you understand the less you know, you will  
‘become sensible of your ostentation, your presumption, and your impertinence, and know the difference  
‘between criticism and painting.’

It is wise to put the best constructions upon human conduct. 'No one,' said Flechier, Bishop of Nismes, 'reviles mankind, but through the desire of engaging 'the notice of mankind.' And here we may remember what occurred to Burckhardt. When he went from Europe to visit the country of the Bedouin Arabs, he drew an unfavourable picture of them, because he compared them with Europeans. After being seven years in the East, however, he qualified his opinions, because he then compared them with the Turks\*. Our appreciations, assuredly, depend in a great measure on our associations; and slanderers, for the most part, may be compared to those insects † which lay their eggs in the flower-beds of the most beautiful plants.

## LXXXII.

WHO ASSIGN WEAK MOTIVES IN PREFERENCE TO STRONG  
ONES.

WHEN there are two motives, the more prevalent often gives way, in point of publicity, to the lesser. There can be no doubt, for instance, that the Reformation received no small degree of accession from the princes and people of Germany from other causes than those of religion. The people were well pleased to be relieved from fasts, espionage, and confessions; and the princes were fully alive to the hope of appropriating the property of the church. But the published causes of

\* See his Notes on the Bedouin Arabs, p. 203, 4to.

† Brumota, *vide* Blumenbach, Elements, c. 212.

the Reformation were the interests of religion. This was the pretence; that, the wished-for, expected, and enjoyed reward.

## LXXXIII.

WHO SEE CLEARLY, AND YET REPRESENT SUPERFICIALLY.

DENINA was an instance of this. He saw vividly; and yet Ugoni justly accuses him of not excelling in the art of colouring and shading the characters he has sketched in the history of western Italy, nor even in that of the Italian revolutions. And this reminds me of a passage in Mendelsohn's 'Phædon;' implying that the soul acquires a knowledge of kindred spirits by contemplating itself. Mendelsohn adopted his own rule. He studied himself, and thence became a light to lighten other men's darkness. His work is far superior to that of Plato: having more strength and power, therefore carrying more conviction. Some one has said, and most truly has he said, that in Plato's treatise we feel the soul *may* live; but in Mendelsohn's, that it *must* live.

## LXXXIV.

WHO HAVE SUCCEEDED IN DETRACTING THEIR ENEMIES  
FOR AGES.

————— 'Alas! how faint,  
How slow, the dawn of beauty and of truth  
Breaks the reluctant shades of Gothic night,  
Which yet involve the nations!'—*Akenside*.

SOME men, and even some nations, have been curiously successful in their detractions: for they have



succeeded in ruining the characters of their adversaries, not only for years, but for ages. The Romans loudly exclaimed against what they were pleased to call *Punica fides*\*; but a more perfidious people, than themselves, never lived upon the earth! Their conduct in Spain alone is sufficient to testify, that, in public obligation, they were as far beneath the subsequent Goths and Vandals, as they were superior to them in the arts and military skill. In fact, a little minute inquiry, even into their own history, soon convinces us, that their own aggressions were, almost uniformly, the causes of the subsequent virulence of their historians.

Bearing all this in recollection, are we to doubt the punishment inflicted upon Regulus? Is the account to be doubted, because Polybius, who lived in the same age, is silent in respect to it? On what authority does it rest; since the Decade of Livy, commemorating the events of that period, has been lost? Voltaire ascribes the whole to the imagination of Frenshemius, a German of the seventeenth century. Indeed! Had Voltaire taken the trouble to consult the work of Frenshemius, instead of the superficial dictionary of Moreri, he would have discovered, that Frenshemius does not relate the cruelties, inflicted upon that nobly-minded man, on his own authority; but upon those of Dio †, Horace ‡, Ap-  
pian §, Valerius Maximus ||, Cicero ¶, and St. Augus-

\* Livy, lib. xxxvi. 17. Thus Cicero, 'Carthaginienses fraudulentissimi et mendaces.'

† Diodorus apud Fulvium Visuvium.

‡ Carmen seculare.

§ Punico Epit. 18.

|| I. 1.

¶ De Off. iii. 27.



tine\*. The fact is, Frenshemius has only copied what he found in Dio apud Fulvium Visuvium.

Shall we regard, also, with implicit faith, the character of the Goths, as given by the Romans? Herodotus and most of the Greek writers speak of them, under the name of Scythians, with respect; and Augustine † says of those who took Rome, that they spared so many, that it seemed surprising they should have killed any. The Goths, however, appreciated the Romans after the same manner that the Romans appreciated them. 'When we would brand an enemy,' said they, 'we call him a Roman; comprehending in that name whatever is base, and cowardly, covetous, false, and vicious ‡.' In fact, neither were to be trusted when they spoke of each other.

## LXXXV.

## WHO ARE KNOWN BY THEIR LITERARY PREFERENCES.

THE mental capacities of some may be partially estimated by their literary preferences. Thus Priolo thought little of Cicero, admired Seneca, and preferred Lucan to Virgil, and Catullus to Horace. Cardinal Chetroni preferred Quintus Curtius to thirty Tacituses; and after him, whom, of all, that is great and glorious, on the shelves of the Vatican? Annæus Florus!—Eminent authors, however, cannot always be known thus.—Milton's favourite was neither Homer, nor Virgil, nor Lucan, nor Tasso; but Ovid!

\* De Civit. Dei, i. 15.

† De Civitat. Dei, i. c. 1. 7.

‡ Luitprandi.

## LXXXVI.

## WHO JUDGE THE WORLD AS IF IT WERE AN OPERA.


MANY men look upon the world, as country-gentlemen gaze at the scenes and actors of the Italian opera ; without knowing the meaning of a tenth that is said ; and, therefore, without any competent ability to distinguish the characters, the value of the sentiments, or the propriety of the development. They return home :— ‘ I have been at the opera,’ say they, ‘ and never saw a scene so full of folly and impertinence in my life. ‘ Such squeaking ! such squalling ! the Lord deliver every man and every woman that take delight in the ‘ opera !’ Are there not thousands of persons who judge just in the same way of the world, and all its complication of inhabitants and things ?

## LXXXVII.

## WHO JUDGE BEFORE THEY HEAR.

IF we stop, always, to think, before we deliver our sentiments, we shall be in danger of sometimes acting the hypocrite.

Many men answer a question, and settle a subject, before they have heard the one proposed, or the other witnessed. Solomon alludes to one of these ; and expressly says, that he, who does so, shall, assuredly, ‘ come to shame.’ But if every man were to be banished, who decides upon a subject before he has heard the grounds on which that subject rests, St. Paul’s would be nearly sufficient to contain the population of



Middlesex; and the small county of Rutland, large enough to feed the entire population of the three kingdoms and all their dependencies.

We are reminded of a passage in Bacon:—‘The minds of some resemble those ill-arranged mansions, in which there are numerous small chambers, but no one spacious room.’ They can store up many parts of things; but no one subject of great compass.

If some judge before they hear, others form conclusions before they see: and this may serve to remind us of the caution which M. Sauguin used to Louis XIV. in regard to the princess of Bavaria:—‘Sire, be not disgusted with her at the first glance, and you will afterwards be pleased with her.’ And so it happened. Many men find that they love the ugly woman they married for money, much better than they would have done, for a continuance, the beautiful creature they would have married for love.

## LXXXVIII.

## WHO SPELL MEN BACKWARDS.

SOME men, even of experience, spell mankind, as Beatrice says she spelt them, ‘backward.’

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‘I never yet saw man,  
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featur’d,  
But she would spell them backward. If fair-fac’d,  
She’d swear the gentleman should be her sister!  
If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antick,  
Made a foul blot: if tall, a lance ill-headed;  
If low, an aglet very vilely cut;  
If speaking, why a vane, blown with all winds;  
If silent, why a block, moved with none!

So turns she every man the wrong-side out,  
And never gives to truth and virtue that  
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.'

This is not the right way to read mankind; but it is certain, that there are men whom we are compelled to read from right to left. In this manner, we should peruse those, who resemble the critics, that blame Virgil for not permitting his hero to see Homer in Elysium several years before he died.

'We should read the Testament,' says Whichcot, 'as a man would read a letter from a friend; in which he doth only seek after what was his friend's mind and meaning, not what he can put upon his words.'

One thing is certain; refined and elegant minds can never be adequately judged by men pursuing the vulgar interests of life: for the square and the rule, the plummet and the line, can never be intrinsically adjusted.

#### LXXXIX.

##### WHO READ MEN THE WRONG WAY.

THE practices of many, in their pursuit of fortune, may be compared to the manner in which the Hebrews and Chinese read books. The former begin at the bottom of the right side of the page, and read upwards towards the left: the latter begin from the right hand, too; but they begin at the top and read vertically down to the bottom.

Thus, when Iturbide caused himself to be elected to the imperial dignity at Mexico, he lost his authority from having dissolved the assembly, which had elected him, because some of the members had voted against his usurpation. Thus, too, all endeavours to conciliate

the revolvers of Venezuela were paralyzed by the absurdity of merely granting them an amnesty, without, at the same time, making an offer to place them on a par with the native Spaniards. This insult redoubled the energy of the revolvers, and led to the final establishment of the republic of Columbia. Where should we frequently be, were it not for our enemies' mistakes?

Columbus, too, read men sideways, as it were. No one has ever yet lived, whose career has had so great an effect on human affairs as Columbus; yet was he fated to die in ignorance of the grandeur of his own discovery. Those discoveries, however, may not have added to the happiness of Europe. I accede to the nobility of the enterprise, but am dubious as to the benefit of the discovery. Be that, however, as it may, certain it is, that Columbus made two fatal mistakes. It was an inconceivable error, after the experience he had had of bad men, to people the island he had discovered with culprits from the prisons, and the refuse of the towns. It was an equal oversight in policy, as well as an open and flagrant act of ingratitude towards those who had relieved him after his shipwreck, not to purchase lands for settlements, as William Penn did, a century after, rather than seize upon them in defiance of every Christian axiom, as if he had received an express command from Heaven. He was, therefore, not undeservedly treated when he felt himself impeded, at every step, by the intrigues of men in office in Spain; and his efforts paralyzed by the crimes, turbulence, and insolence of a more detestable band of ruffians, than were ever before let loose upon an innocent, confiding, and, till they arrived, happy community of men.

Columbus, we are told, was desirous of conciliating and civilizing the natives ; and, by means of colonization, of introducing the useful arts, and subjecting every thing to the court of law, order, and religion. If so, no one ever went a more absurd way to work ; and so it must always be allowed to men, who obtain that by every species of atrocity, as well as the ruin of an innocent people, which could have been obtained with less than half the trouble, less than half the expense ; and with the satisfaction of having exercised every virtuous energy and every grateful impulse.

When I think of his enterprise, I glow with admiration ; when I think of his ingratitude, I spurn him from my heart with indignation and shame.

## XC.

## WHO YIELD TO PREJUDICE.

— ‘ Opinion gilds with varying rays  
Those painted clouds which beautify our days.’

It is an irksome employment, and, for the most part, a useless labour, to attempt setting men right against their habits ; and as to driving them from the most deep-rooted of their prejudices, they can, for the most part, be served only by letting time do the work of authority.

Prejudices are fogs of the mind ; for they enlarge every thing to the vision. A passage in Thomson will illustrate this subject :—

‘ Seen through the turbid air, beyond the life  
Objects appear ; and, wildered, o’er the waste



The shepherd stalks gigantic. Till at last,  
Wreathed dun around, in deeper circles still  
Successive closing, sits the general fog  
Unbounded on the world.'

To encounter these prejudices by violence is like stemming the waves of the ocean after a north-west wind.

Napoleon knew the danger of shocking prejudices, and the wisdom of conforming to them when great objects are to be accomplished. When he dispatched Savary, Duke of Rovigo, therefore, to St. Petersburg, he desired him to condemn no custom, and to comment on no absurdity. 'The French are but too justly accused,' said he, 'of comparing all customs with their own, and of setting themselves up as models. Do you avoid it.' And this may serve to recall to our memory what Lord Lyttelton said on the repeal of the Jew Bill \*. 'Public wisdom must, on some occasions, condescend to give way to popular folly, especially in a country where the humour of the people must be considered as attentively as the humour of a king in an absolute monarchy. Under both forms of government a prudent and honest ministry will indulge a small folly, and will resist a great one. Not to vouchsafe, now and then, a kind of indulgence to the former, would discover an ignorance of human nature; not to resist the latter, at all times, would be meanness and servility.'

Superficial men are like furrows lightly turned up by the plough. But no one resembles the seal in seeing better in dull and foggy weather than in the sunshine: for it is never with prejudice, as it is with the




falls of Niagara, where the more numerous the vapours the brighter and clearer the rainbows become. Prejudices, indeed, are sometimes so inveterate, that there are some countries, in which neither liberty nor even authority itself can root.

## XCI.

## WHO NEVER COMMEND BUT WITH A ' BUT.'

I KNEW a man who never heard any one praised, but he damped the praise. He did praise, occasionally, it is true, himself: but then it was to mortify the listener. If the listener praised, in turn, he would immediately change sides, and begin to censure the very person he had before eulogized. He went to church every Sunday; read the prayers audibly; sung with the clerk; would cry like a child in misfortune; and in the course of an hour sing a song to drive his care away. He was, nevertheless, a good father and master, but a disagreeable neighbour. He was a good shot; played an excellent hand at whist; exceedingly hospitable and good-natured; vain, yet modest; an extraordinary and a confessed coward; loved dogs; half-starved his horses; made an excellent bowl of punch; danced with extraordinary facility at sixty-five, after the old fashion; and washed his hands every Sunday morning.

He never commended but with a ' but.' With him Naaman was an honourable man, and a mighty man of valour; ' but ' he was a leper.



## XCII.

## ROCHEFOUCAULT.

SOME authors are honoured for their faults, in compliment to their beauties; and among these may be particularly instanced Homer, Æschylus, and Virgil; Dante, Ariosto, and Tasso; Chaucer and Spenser; Shakspeare and Milton.

Some are, also, most widely known by the least of their works; and such was the case with Rochefoucault. His maxims, some of which are unjust, some common-place, and others superficial, have raised a wide name to the author; but his '*Mémoires de la Régence de la Reine Anne d'Autriche*,' is so little known, at least, in this country, that it is never quoted, and scarcely even once alluded to in the course of a long literary life; and that, too, in defiance of Barbier's opinion, that its style has all the strength of Tacitus.

We read Rochefoucault to be pleased one moment, and displeased the next; admiring him and loathing him. Mons. Suard says of him, however, that his essays are to morals what an excellent collection of anatomical dissertations is to the medical science. This is an assertion I cannot admit. But if Grotius, Locke, Montesquieu, and Smith, have been the most influential of all writers during the last two centuries, in respect to peace and war, the human understanding, laws, and the wealth of nations, it may be as safely asserted that the most prevailing maxims on motives and actions have been those of Rochefoucault.

This celebrated axiomist, however, lived a very retired life ; and we ought never to forget, while reading the results of his observations, that he drew all their essence from the arena of a court ; and that only : and what kind of an arena that was we may amply learn from Montesquieu \*.

Chesterfield appears to have known as little of Newton as he did of Ethiopia ; and Rochefoucault so little in respect to the progress of natural philosophy, that when Peirese died, he confessed that he had not even once heard of his name ! These two circumstances are of themselves sufficient to prove, that neither Rochefoucault nor Chesterfield had elevated minds.

Napoleon's maxim was, that all men are moved by interest and fear. Rochefoucault's precise and pregnant satire resolves every motive of man into self-interest. Self-interest does, indeed, seem to be the grand cement of social man. But, in telling this secret, Rochefoucault stripped the heart, as it were, naked, with all its deformities ; careless of chances, and reckless of consequences. He presented poison in one hand, without administering an antidote in the other ; like an unskilful surgeon, who, after laying open a deep wound, permits it to gangrene, with little or no solicitude as to the cure or subsequent contagious expansion.

\* ' Ambition joined to idleness, and baseness to pride, a desire of obtaining riches without labour, and an aversion to truth ;— flattery, treason, perfidy, violation of engagements, contempt of civil duties, fear of the prince's virtue, hope from his weakness, but above all, a perpetual ridicule cast upon virtue, are, I think, the characteristics by which courtiers, in all ages and countries, have been constantly distinguished.'

His system implies, *that all virtues are concealed vices*. From this we might suspect the purity of his mind. Yet Madame de Sévigné speaks of him, not only with respect but with admiration. She even says, that he had rendered death so familiar, that it presented nothing new or terrible to his imagination. We must not trust, however, too much to what is generally called experience; for certainly it is true, that

‘ Men may be read, as well as books, too much.’

Helvetius wrote\* to prove self-love to be the foundation of all morality. To be offended at the effects of it, he would say, is to complain of the showers of spring, the rains of autumn, the heats of summer, and the snows of winter. And this he says in the spirit of one, who is an enemy to all the usurpations of prejudice. Rochefoucault goes farther; for he appears to regard vice as the source and parent of every virtue; by this reminding us of the rack-tree of Abyssinia, which has no scent, is of a bitter taste, and is never visited by bees. Many of Rochefoucault’s maxims indeed have no recommendation but the point with which they begin or conclude.

Self-love and selfishness have two different significations. The latter, as it is well defined by Dean Tucker†, consists not in having regard to ourselves, but in having no regard to any thing else. Self-love, in fact, may be compared to a river, which, dividing into two streams, those streams partake of the colour and the quality of the soil through which they respectively flow. That

\* ‘ De l’Esprit.’


† ‘ Light of Nature pursued.’

self-love, which promotes the ease, the comfort, the prosperity, and the happiness of others, in order to make itself more blest, is one branch of the stream : that self-love, which causes us to pursue the same object,—that is, our own happiness,—with little or no reference to other men's feelings or interests, is the other branch. The one is virtue ; the other vice. Nor is the former less of a virtue because it tends to render us happy and contented with ourselves, than if it did not ; any more than we ought to be esteemed less virtuous, because, in choosing a road through a difficult country, we prefer that which is the most shady, the most embellished with fine buildings, and the most abounding in beautiful and magnificent plants.

Self-love is calm and considerate ; selfishness is violent and offensive ; so much so, indeed, that even those who act upon its omnipotence abhor it in others, and ground upon it, in consequence, their chief argument in favour of their own vices and crimes. They love their interests, in fact, better than they understand them.

Montesquieu seems to have supposed, that indifference to the wants and fortunes of others is one of the most decided characteristics of all republics. Not, perhaps, more so than it is in monarchies and despotisms ; for all seem to forget that communities of interest ought to resemble gravitation, which, being universal, every minute particle is affected by the gravitating influence of all the rest.

Nature seems to shower her greatest worldly gifts on certain men, as if she were resolved to indicate her contempt of birth, riches, and distinction. Rochefoucault's



system, however, places all men upon a level. It admits not only of no exceptions, but of no gradations. Hence, in no instance does he allude to the influence, which the relative intellects of men have upon their manners, passions, or even pursuits ; and yet he was accounted one of the shrewdest men of his time ; and it cannot be denied, notwithstanding their defects, that his maxims constitute a body of intelligence, by which every one may profit according to the depth of his understanding.

Cardinal de Retz said of him, that he had no attention for small concerns, nor any knowledge of great ones ; that he could not extend his views far enough ; neither could he perceive at once what was in his reach ; that he was irresolute ; and that, though not ill qualified for counsel, he had little or no capacity for action. ‘ It would have been better,’ says he, ‘ for his fame and interest, had he been content to be only what he was in reality, viz., the finest gentleman of his age.’

What La Rochefoucault was in practice, it may not be so easy to determine ; for though Madame de Sevigné speaks highly of him, and Segráis assures us, that he was not only insinuating and agreeable in address and conversation, but of great sweetness of temper, Madame de Maintenon, who had still greater opportunities of knowing, declares that he was subtle and intriguing ; and others have not scrupled even to assert, that if he was flexible and gifted with knowledge, he was nevertheless false.

With all his qualities one thing must be conceded, I think, by competent researchers ; and that is, that he took nature only on one side ; in profile, as it were ;

and this must often be the result of our drawing when we sketch from natural discernment only. It is necessary to read as well as to observe; and Segrais says Rochefoucault never read. Hence the criticism is but too just, that he is a philosopher chiefly to the idle, the envious, the half-informed, and the most worthless portion of mankind.

Let us now see what Schiller, the celebrated German poet, thought on this subject. 'Perfection in nature is  
' no property of matter, but of mind. All minds are  
' happy through their perfection. I desire the happiness of all minds, because I love myself. The happiness, which I represent to myself, becomes my happiness; therefore I desire to awaken, to multiply, to exalt such representations; therefore I desire to spread happiness around me. Whatever beauty, whatever perfection, whatever enjoyment I produce without me, I also produce within me. Whatever I neglect or destroy, to myself also I neglect and destroy. I desire the happiness of others, because I desire my own.'

Can any one be so ignorant of Nature, of man, and of manners, as to confound this self-love with that which, like the wolf and the hyena, would draw all others into its den, in order to feast in solitude to repletion? Some men look at principles so intensely, that a film comes over their judgments; reminding us of the circumstance, that small stars frequently disappear from the sight when the eye is turned directly upon them. Rochefoucault mistakes the origin of self-love for its end. He tells us the secret springs of many actions, but he is silent as to those more ennobling motives,

which mingle with the others, regulate their intensity, and purify our nature for the enjoyment of a more extended, a more magnificent, and a more enduring sphere. In fact, had he not studied men in a court and witnessed motives and actions during a period of civil war, he had, doubtless, written differently. It is natural for every one to write in consonance with his experience. To live for ourselves (through ourselves) is the very essence of social and moral vulgarity. Give us, therefore, those authors who lessen our contempt for our species; and who animate us with the desire of deriving the principal portion of our happiness from the reflected happiness of those with whom we live, and with whom we have concerns.

## XCIII.

## WHO AFFECT TO DEPRECIATE WHAT THEY LOVE.

THIS is no unusual practice, whatever may be the age of the parties, or the country in which they live. I shall give, therefore, only one example. The Duke of Norfolk desired to marry the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots. He, therefore, affected to speak of her to Queen Elizabeth in a very extraordinarily disrespectful manner. But it did not answer. For this very peculiarity excited the queen's jealousy and curiosity so much, that she had him, almost immediately after, committed to the Tower.

Young ladies and young gentlemen are very much given to this practice, when they are compelled to speak of those they secretly admire too much. I must confess, that, when young, I every now and then did so myself.



## XCIV.

## WHO BELIEVE THE LAST THEY HEAR.


THE last person they hear, and the last book they read. Thus M. du Carla rejected the existence of phlogiston when he studied Lavoisier; and when he studied Sennebis, admitted it. 'When I read the Gospel,' said La Rowes, 'I believe in Christ; when I read the Koran, 'I'm almost tempted to believe in Mahomet.' 'Then,' said Philoletes, 'when you read Mendelsohn, you believe in neither.' 'That is the case,' answered he; 'I shall, one day, I hope, be able to think for myself.'

Many monarchs, after the same manner, are guided in opinion by the last adviser they consult. This weakness, perhaps, was more fatal to Louis XVI., than all the courtiers by whom he was betrayed.

## XCV.

## WHO HAVE NO POWERS OF APPRECIATION.

THE Duke of Argyle, who commanded in Spain in the time of Queen Anne, was so careless of party considerations, that his letters to the ministry were frequently such as largely to exercise their patience. 'He has, all 'this summer,' said Lord Bolingbroke to the Earl of Orrery, 'sent such letters hither as his friends do neither 'deserve nor fear; and such as no minister living could 'bear from any man, but one, whose heart is good, and 'who only errs from too much heat of constitution. One 'fatal error has misled him; which is, that he has reasoned, abstractedly, on what he saw in his own sphere,



‘and did not consider, nor indeed know, the whole  
‘system of the queen’s measures.’

Most men judge, and therefore argue, after a similar manner. They stand, as it were, under one of the minor buttresses of a great building ; and, with all the solemnity of oracles, insist that the architect has consulted neither taste, durability, nor proportion. Wherefore?—Because the small buttress, under which they stand, exhibits some slight symptoms of disproportion and decay. Man, however, loves knowledge ;

‘ And the beams of truth  
More welcome touch his understanding’s eye,  
Than all the blandishments of sound his ear,  
Than all of taste his tongue.’—*Akenside*.


That is, some men love true knowledge. Others are so warped by prejudice, interest, or enthusiasm, that they shut their eyes and ears so closely, so absolutely, and with such entire determination, that if we attempt to open either, they are almost ready to cast us on the earth. Hence the difficulty they have in seeing the propriety of any thing. They scarcely know the difference between pleasure and happiness. They cannot appreciate wisdom even from learned, much less unlearned, lips ; and finding obstructions even in discriminating virtue from vice, or two mixed lines from two parallel ones, they remind us, every now and then, of Pope’s opinion of lexicographers, whom he would allow to know the meaning of two single words, but not of two words put together. And here we may again resort to our masters,—the noblest we have !—the poets.

‘ One part, one little part, they dimly scan  
Through the dark medium of life’s feverish dream ;  
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,  
If but that little part incongruous seem.’

*Beattie, Minstrel.*

So impatient are they in their judgments ! To see things on one side only is the characteristic of the multitude ; to comprehend in one view all parts of a subject, or of an object, being the fortunate characteristic of a few,—a very few ! The former measure heights as ants measure a pyramid ; and gauge depths as guillemots sound the ocean. In all their appreciations, too, they seize the wrong side of the tapestry.

We may sometimes illustrate arguments by references to subjects of natural philosophy. The refraction of the atmosphere, for instance, causes the sun, moon, planets, satellites, and fixed stars, to appear more elevated above the horizon than they really are : we do not see them in their true places. And is it not well known to astronomers, that what are called fixed stars become less and less the more they are attempted to be magnified ? When we know not the design of an agent, can we strictly decide on the use of his action ? and how can we appreciate for good or for evil, unless we know the extent of men’s hopes and fears, and the thousand and one circumstances by which they are surrounded, connected, excited, or restrained ? It is impossible ! We can only assert, we know—something !



## XCVI.

WHO APPRECIATE ACCORDING TO THEIR MENTAL  
ANALOGIES.

JOHNSON called Sir Robert Walpole a fixed star; Chatham a meteor. The judgment is applicable to neither.

We appreciate, when we appreciate honestly, according to the analogy, or the want of analogy, which exists between our minds and those of the persons and things that we criticise. This is the cause why Hein-sius preferred Lucan to Virgil; why Malherbe valued the latter poet more than Statius; why Scaliger preferred him to Homer; and why the same critic celebrated Juvenal at the expense of Horace. This is the cause why Longinus had so little esteem for Euripides; why La Harpe expressed a contempt for Milton; and why Johnson disclaimed the 'Fleece,' and disregarded Gray.

This is the cause that one order of mind prefers *Æschylus*, another *Sophocles*, another *Euripides*, another *Anacreon*, *Catullus*, *Petronius*, and *Secundus*; another *Plutarch*, another *Epictetus*, another *Cæsar's Commentaries*, another *Bacon*, and another *Bourdaloue*, *Massillon*, *Tillotson*, and *Barrow*. This, too, is one great cause why men possess various learning, and are yet devoid of taste; and why some possess both, and are yet deficient in the more sublime attributes of genius.

'All manners take a tincture from our own;  
Or some discoloured through our passions shown;

Or fancy's beam enlarges, multiplies,  
Contracts, inverts, and gives ten thousand dyes \*.

Men, for the most part, are more disposed to be dazzled by splendour and brilliancy than to be charmed with qualities that adorn, fructify, and humanize the heart. In fact, as some eyes are so defective, that they never enable their possessors to appreciate with correctness either form, texture, or colour, how shall they appreciate enlarged combinations of all?

XCVII.

WHO JUDGE MEN LESS CRITICALLY THAN MAN.

WE may instance Adam Smith. The portrait shall, however, be drawn by a friend who knew him, with precision.

'The enlarged views of human affairs, on which his mind habitually dwelt, left him neither time nor inclination to study in detail the uninteresting peculiarities of ordinary characters; and accordingly, though intimately acquainted with the capacities of the intellect and the workings of the heart, and accustomed in his theories to remark, with the most delicate hand, the nicest shades, both of genius and of the passions; yet, in judging of individuals, it sometimes happened that his estimates were in a surprising degree wide of the truth †.' It is, in fact, more easy to know mankind in general, than it is to get at the characters of some men in particular.

\* Pope, 'Moral Essays,' i., 33.

† 'Life and Writings of Smith,' p. 93.

The portrait above drawn is strictly characteristic of many persons, bred and vegetating in a college. Let us turn to what has been said of Dr. Parr.

‘ Though possessing the wonderful power of reading  
 ‘ a character at a glance, yet when his own prejudices, or  
 ‘ the artful insinuations of others, interposed, he very  
 ‘ often misjudged men strangely. He sometimes with-  
 ‘ drew his confidence from those who had not ceased to  
 ‘ deserve it, and bestowed it upon those who were not  
 ‘ worthy to receive it. He was sometimes the dupe of  
 ‘ the ill-designing, and sometimes the unconscious in-  
 ‘ strument of promoting the ends of the evil-minded.’

This was certainly the truth ; yet who ever lived that considered himself more infallible in point of penetration than Dr. Parr ? If Adam Smith erred in his judgment, he had, at least, the grace of modesty ; whereas Parr,—Mercy, I cry you mercy !

#### XCVIII.

##### WHO JUDGE BY RESULTS.

‘ *Natura omnes fecit judices, paucos artifices* \*.’

THE smallest of causes may disconcert the best concerted of plans ; yet most men judge by results. With the vulgar every man is wise, discerning, cowardly, valiant or a fool, pure or a villain, as circumstances turn out.

---

‘ My lord !

Human condition always censures things

\* ‘ Of all the mottoes I ever met with, this one, writ over a  
 ‘ water-clock at Clene, pleased me best.’—*Locke’s Letter to Mr.  
 Molineux*, Feb. 22, 1696–7.

By their event. My aims have had success,  
So strangely hapless, that will blast the truth  
Of their intention's purity.'

*Glaphorne—The Lady's Privilege.*

There are many passages in this almost-forgotten poet well worth preserving.

Some men have not even the virtue to estimate the baseness of the vices they condemn.

'If thou hadst not been born the worst of men,  
says Timon to Apemanthus,


'Thou hadst not been a knave and flatterer.'

Some would give us a disgust not only to things, but to life; and in this class we may include the privy-counsellor, Huisgen, who had the insolence to confess to Goethe, that he could see defects even in the works of the Deity himself.

'Just Heaven! on what inhospitable coast,  
In what new region is Achilles lost?'

Some men raise accusations upon all the circumstances of fortune. If favourable, we are fortunate; if unfavourable, guilty. Thus, because the taking of Otranto by Mahomet II. caused the Duke of Calabria to return from Tuscany, where he occupied an offensive position, the circumstance of that return was so favourable to the interests of Lorenzo de Medici, that his enemies immediately raised a report, that he had secretly invited the Turks into Italy.

Some princes appreciate men, capable of service, as statesmen formerly appreciated Gibraltar. The rock of that citadel is not so barren and uninteresting as



most writers have described. The view from it is delightful. Of an evening, the sun sets in the Atlantic with almost matchless splendour; and from the heights are seen the romantic shores of Spain, the sea that separates Europe from Africa, and the mountains of Barbary.

When the town was taken by Sir George Rook (in the reign of Queen Anne), the service was not thought worthy of gratitude. It has ever since remained in the hands of the English, and now it is prized at a rate, perhaps, even more than it is worth. Thus is it, most men sit in authority just as Rapin sat in judgment on Homer, Thucydides, Plato, and Demosthenes. He knew nothing of Greek; they, therefore, little or nothing of political interests.

Cromwell estimated better. 'Whether any one place  
' be attemptable,' wrote he to Blake and Montague\*,  
' especially that of the towne and castle of Gibraltar,  
' which, if possessed and made tenable by us, would it  
' not be bothe an advantage to our trade and an annoy-  
' ance to the Spanyard, and enable us, without keep-  
' inge so great a fleet on that coast, with six nimble  
' friggotts lodged there, to doe the Spanyard more  
' harme than by a fleet, and ease our owne charge?  
' The Lorde guide you to doe that which is pleasinge  
' in his sight.'

Mr. Fox said, in the time of the American war,—  
' We must never give up a possession, which divides  
' France from France and Spain from Spain †.'

\* See 'Thurloe's State Papers,' iv., 745.

† 'Sinclair's Corresp.,' i. 390.



## XCIX.

## WHOSE LIVES AND WORKS ARE DIFFERENT.


BERNI'S Latin poems are in the style of Catullus ; but they want the tenderness of that poet. His ' Orlando ' we read with some indignation ; for it is a mere recombination of Boiardo's ' Orlando Innamorato ;' so much better done than the original, that it has entirely superseded it. His personal character was vicious ; and if we would derive pleasure from the works of many of the most eminent Italian cultivators of literature, it were better not to make ourselves too intimately acquainted either with their morals or habits.

Men of talent, especially artists, are but too often loose and vicious not only in their manners but in their morals ; those who cultivate their minds largely, however, are seldom so. Mere talent is but an equivocal possession, after all.

## C.

## NO MAN'S MEMORY SAFE FROM PARTY MISREPRESENTATIONS.

SOME men have rough manners, equivocal conduct, and yet kind hearts ; and we may adduce, as an instance, General Santerre, commander of the guard at the execution of Louis XVI. For many years this person was held up to the detestation of Europe, as one of the basest of mankind. By almost all parties he was consigned to ignominy and abhorrence ; yet, some years after the deed, to which his name most essentially belongs, a royalist and a patriot thus embalms his name :—



‘ The muscular expansion of his tall person, the sonorous hoarseness of his voice, his rough manners, and his easy and vulgar eloquence, made him a hero among the lower rabble ; and, in truth, he had gained a despotic empire over the dregs of the faux-bourgs. He moved them at his will ; but that was all he knew how to do, or could do : for, as to the rest, he was neither wicked nor cruel. He engaged blindly in all conspiracies ; but he was never guilty of the execution of them, either by himself or by those who obeyed him. He was always concerned for an unfortunate person, of whatever party he might be. Affliction and tears disarmed his hands.’ This passage was written by Mons. Montjoie ; and had that writer been a revolutionist, I should have doubted the faithfulness of the portrait, and not have engraved it here. M. Montjoie, however, was a royalist, and knew his subject well.

From this picture, and others which it would be far from difficult to select, we may learn, that no man’s character can be estimated for history till after the expiration of half a century, if he belong to a party ; and not to be regarded at all, either for good or for evil, if his biographer, or the historian, chances to be a bigoted priest.


Dr. Formy called Fox, the quaker, a man of turbulent spirit. Penn, however, declares that he was so meek, contented, easy, and steady, that it was a pleasure to be in his company ; that he exercised no authority over evil ; but that every where, and in all, with love, compassion, and long-suffering. Then, as to

Penn himself: who has not heard of his mildness, his eloquence, his modesty, his general virtues, and his justice of legislation? Yet Bishop Burnet says, he had such a high opinion of his own eloquence, that he thought nothing could stand before it; and that he had a tedious, luscious way, that was not apt to overcome a man's reason, though it might tire his patience. Compare all this with 'Sewel's History of the Quakers,' and 'Clarkson's Life of Penn;' and then determine whether the recorded opinions of partisans, and party-writers, are worth even so much as the fiftieth fraction of a gnat's wing?

## CI.

## WHO DELIGHT IN DRAWING PARALLELS.

THE French are very expert at association. Barthelemy draws a parallel between Herodotus and Thucydides; another associates Buffon with Aristotle, Pliny, and Linnæus. Fontenelle contrasts the merits of Racine with those of Corneille; D'Alembert associates those of Corneille with Bossuet; Thomas draws a parallel between Sully and Colbert; Herault between the ages of Augustus and Louis XIV.; and Voltaire between the characters of that king and our William III. And here it may not be irrelevant to remark, that Father Rapin, who wrote the parallel between the Greek and Latin poets, orators, and historians, is said to have been ignorant of Greek; and that Perault, who laboured so strenuously to dethrone the ancients, was not only ignorant of Greek, but of Latin.



Some have associated the names and reigns of Charlemagne and Peter the Great; Anthony de Bandole draws a parallel between Cæsar and Henry IV.; and one of the best portions of De Bury's memoirs of the latter is, where he describes the coincidences in the life, character, and fortune of that prince with those of Philip of Macedon.

Parallels may sometimes be found in States. Thus in the relative rise of Tyre, Carthage, Venice, and Genoa; in rivalships, as in the instances of Persia and Greece, England and France: in confederacies, also, as in those of the Achæan, Helvetic, and Belgic leagues.

## CII.

## POETS UNJUSTLY APPRECIATED.

VIRGIL would have been esteemed a necromancer, had our ancestors had no opportunity of correcting the folly of the darker ages\*. Some insist, that Virgil has not one attribute of a poet, but a pure and exquisite style: Lucan's beauties, in the opinion of some, are reduced to his love of liberty, generous sentiments, contempt of death, and his sublime personification of Jupiter. Virgil, according to some †, moves like a prelate; Lucan, like a bold, victorious general; and as to Terence, he has no character, no plot, no incident, no wit. Style is his only merit; and his dramas were written only for mathematicians!

\* How the folly of esteeming Virgil a necromancer rose, may be seen in Hist. P. Virg. Mar. a Car. Ruæo.

† Verulanus.

We all remember the persecution Tasso's poem underwent from the circumstance of Boileau's having applied to his style the term 'cliquant;' and some there are who would even reduce the fine passages in Dante to two! one of terror\*; the other of pity†.

Shall we turn to our own country? Some rank Pope no higher than the class of ingenious men; and as to Shakspeare, Hume appreciated him in a manner disgraceful only to himself‡. Napoleon, too, estimated him (and Milton) so entirely after the manner of a Frenchman in the reign of Louis XIV., that it is rather amusing than displeasing. 'I have read Shakspeare,' said he; 'there is nothing that approaches Corneille and Racine. There is no possibility of reading one of his pieces through. They excite pity. As to Milton, there is nothing but his invocation to the Sun, and two or three other passages. The rest is a mere rhapsody§.'

Byron had little admiration of Shakspeare; and Pope almost as little of Milton. The opinion of Salmasius is that of an enemy; hence he could never be induced to regard Milton's Latin poems as worthy any one but a school-boy. In Germany, previous to 1764, the 'Paradise Lost' was so little known, and still more so little appreciated, that one of the most influential critics of that country || presumed to speak of it in the following manner: 'Paradise Lost had long mouldered in the

\* Ugolino.

† Close, v. Canto Inferno.

‡ Vol. ix. 77. § Thibaudeau's Memoirs of the Consulate.

|| Professor Gottscheid of Leipsic, in his Preface to the 'Arminius' of Baron Crouzeck.



‘bookseller’s warehouse, so as scarce to be any longer remembered, when two persons, not more distinguished for their rank than literature\*, undertook to convince their countrymen of the excellence of that poem: and this they did so effectually, that England, for a long time, was brought to believe, or at least to say that they believed, what, without such powerful recommendations, they would never have thought of.’

This would seem to be a curious species of impertinence, could we forget, that some even of our own country have overlooked all Milton’s beauties for the purpose of enlarging on his digressions, his allusions to heathen fables, his occasional pedantry, his Hebraisms, Grecisms, and Latinisms; his perpetual employment of technical terms; his episode of Sin and Death (the finest allegory in all poetry); the imperfections of his fable; his employment of old words; his elisions; the length of his periods and his idiomatic expressions; the occasional violence of his metaphors; and his obligations to Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and Italian poets.

Not only his poetical character has been assailed; but his private one: and by whom? Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester. It thus stands recorded in the Sloane Collection of MSS. (No. 4320); where I have myself seen it, and whence I extracted it: ‘The character of Milton was certainly the most corrupt of any man of his age; I do not say so on account of his either being a presbyterian, an independent, a republican, for the government of one (for many honest men were in

\* Lord Roscommon; Addison.

‘every one of these ways); but because he was all these in their turn, without (from any thing that appears to the contrary) a struggle or a blush. Imagine to yourself a thorough time-server, and you could not put him upon any task more completely conformable to that character than what Milton voluntarily underwent. It is true, he was steady enough in one thing; namely, in his aversion to the court and royal family; but this, I suspect, was because he was not received amongst the wits there favourably.’

Thus we find men, eminent ones too, instead of calmly estimating the merits or demerits of others, employing the language of senseless encomium, or of extravagant censure; raising them to heaven, as it were, or thrusting them to Hades; not from sound morals, but from prejudice; not from reason, but passion.

### CIII.

#### SOME PHILOSOPHERS HOW ESTIMATED.

No objects in nature can be strictly represented as they actually are, in all their parts, relations, and capacities of action or sufferance. We are, therefore, reduced to the miserable expedient of representing them only as they appear. Socrates had passed down to posterity as a knave, had not Plato and Xenophon defaced the picture, and redeemed the malice of Aristophanes. Bacon, the father of modern philosophy, was so lightly thought of by Bayle, that he assigned to him only twelve lines; and Hume esteemed him inferior to Galileo. Some, too, have written lightly of Kepler; but Horrox valued him above ‘all the tribe of philosophers.’

How did Bacon himself regard Copernicus?—With such contempt, that, in all his works, he never once alludes to him. Newton was regarded by the methodists of his time as guilty of blasphemy, and as pretending to know what never could be true. What says Gillies in respect to Locke?—That his theory of government is totally impracticable; that it is admirably fitted for producing revolution and sedition; and that, if ever it could be reared, it never could be preserved. Beattie, too (even in his ‘*Essay on the Nature and Immortality of Truth*’!), regards the ‘*Essay on the Human Understanding*’ as tending to prove that there is no such thing as truth, and that virtue is no better than a human contrivance!

Johnson and Priestley esteemed Hartley’s work on Man next to the Bible; but another writer, equally endowed, after quoting two passages from it, boldly exclaims, ‘If I had never read another sentence, I should have required no further evidence of the unsoundness of Hartley’s understanding.’ Warburton calls him a visionary. In a letter to Garrick, he also calls Hume ‘the essay writer,’ and ‘a puppy\*.’ If such are the judgments of eminent men, what can be hoped from the vulgar?

\* ‘I think you very insolently treated by Hume, the essay writer; nor do I see how Millar can be excused from impertinence in showing you the puppy’s letter.’—*Garrick’s Correspondence*.



## CIV.

## WHO ARE DESTITUTE OF PRECISION.

To want precision in language is to engender perpetual accusations against our veracity.

Aristotle has cautioned us against the delusion of demanding geometrical accuracy in moral arguments; and we ought not to forget that eclipses can be computed more accurately than they can be observed. Dr. Herschell states, that on the same evening, and with the same telescope, different eyes see with different effects. While to one observer the planet Jupiter has appeared not larger than an inch in diameter, to another it has appeared to be of four inches; and while to a third it has seemed no larger than a pea, to a fourth it has appeared to be as large as the moon!

Different men, perhaps, have different lenses. But is this the case with men's eyes, ears, and judgments, in respect to almost all the affairs of life; and is not this one great cause of all the exaggerations and diminutions we hear and witness every day? To hear with precision, we must have an unembarrassed ear; to see with correctness and certainty, we must have a pure, unadulterated sight; and in both, our judgments must be charged with a correct mensuration of things. Sophocles, I fear, was too correct when he asserted, that opinion, for the most part, is stronger than truth.

Marsyas lost the victory from a want of precision in the judges. Marsyas was declared victor when he played upon the double flute, and Apollo on the lyre;

but when Apollo sung to his lute, the decision was reversed. Marsyas complained that Apollo had blended two distinct arts; singing and playing. This the god answered by showing, that Marsyas had employed his tongue and fingers with his double flute, and that he had done no more in singing to the notes of his lyre. I think it is very evident that Marsyas ought to have been declared victor; for the argument was not who could produce the most agreeable music, but who was the best player upon a musical instrument. Apollo seems to have thought so too; for, had he really thought himself worthy of being declared victor, he would not, I think, have flayed his opponent.

Admiral Byng, also, lost his life in consequence of a want of precision in the sentence passed upon him. He was found guilty of not doing his utmost 'to take and destroy the ships of France, and to assist such of the king's ships as were engaged; and that he did not exert his utmost power for the relief of St. Philip's Castle.' The article on which he was condemned was the twelfth:—'Every person who, in time of action, shall withdraw, keep back, or not come into sight, or do his utmost, &c., through cowardice, neglect, or disaffection, shall suffer death.' It is very evident from the verdict, and the subsequent appeal of the court to the humanity of the king, that the members of it intended to bring the admiral in guilty, not from cowardice or wilful negligence, but from defect of judgment.

. Here we see the vast importance of precision in language. The verdict ought to have been, according to the sense of the court:—'Guilty of not doing all he

‘ might have done ; but neither from cowardice, disaffection, nor wilful negligence.’


Instead of this, the verdict acquitted him of cowardice and disaffection, but made no allusion whatever to negligence, which, to have been criminal, ought to have been wilful. Not doing a thing is not always negligence ; because we may refrain from doing, on the principle that it ought not to be done.

Byng committed an error in tactics, and the court before which he was tried, committed an error in the construction of language. The court escaped the discipline of the ferula, but the admiral was not quite so fortunate. He suffered through the management of Lord Hardwicke, to screen Lord Anson, and to satisfy the vengeance of a party. On their heads then rest the ignominy and the blood\*!

\* A want of precision in signals, or in the understanding of them, is often attended by very important consequences. A want of precision, for instance, occasioned that to have been a drawn battle, which might have been a victory, on the part of Lord Rodney, in his encounter with the French fleet in the West Indies.

‘ The weathervane being in favour of the British, the admiral had a prospect of a certain and decisive victory. The signal was made for close battle, and every ship to attack her *opposite*. *Neither of these signals were obeyed.* The leading ship, in place of putting up the helm and bearing down, made sail on the same direction, construing the signal to mean by *opposite* not that immediately to leeward, but the *corresponding* ship, that is, the headmost of the enemy’s line.’—*Life of Lord Rodney*, i., 273.

As none of the captains obeyed these signals, the inference must be, that they were of a nature not sufficiently precise. Insubordination alone, it is supposed, could not have caused such a gross violation of duty.



When two nations enter into a war, it is clear that each nation ought to state the object for which they are about to contend. The argument of Mr. Pitt, therefore, cannot, I think, be considered satisfactory, when he stated to the House of Commons\*, that a nation, on entering into a war, is by no means bound to state its objects in clear and positive terms; since, by that confession, it would preclude itself from taking advantage of any fortuitous circumstances which may happen during its continuance.

This by no means follows; since the stating the object of a war does not preclude a nation from taking honest advantages; though it may certainly prevent it, in a variety of instances, from taking dishonest ones.

As to precise pledges of peace, I consider Mr. Fox decidedly correct in asserting, as he frequently did during the French war (particularly in 1800), that where there is a question of peace and war between two nations, that government which refuses to state, with clearness and precision, what she considers a satisfaction, must of necessity feel itself in the wrong.

How many unworthy expedients have warriors and politicians resorted to! Tamerlan† engaged the garrison of Haili to capitulate upon condition that no blood should be spilt. He kept his word. ‘He buried them alive.’ Mahomet II. ‡, at the taking of Negropont, promised a man to spare his head. He did spare his head; but he ‘caused him to be severed through the

\* March 24, 1795. .

† Cuspinian de Turcarum Origine, p. 132.

‡ Puffendorf de Jure Nat., v., c. 22.

middle of his body.' Cromwell served Charles I. much in the same manner. He promised him, that not a 'hair of his head' should be hurt; nor was it hurt.

Philip, Landgrave of Hesse\*, was, after the same manner, cheated by Charles V. by an ambiguity of words. Philip was taken prisoner at the battle of Muhlberg, and detained in confinement, in despite of a solemn convention to the contrary. Charles set him at liberty, and arrested him again without any pretext; and when Philip's son-in-law, Maurice, Elector of Saxony, remonstrated with him, Charles replied, that he had never promised not to arrest him again, but that he should not be kept in perpetual confinement. This memorable and disgraceful cheat was accomplished by the Emperor's causing the words 'ewiger gefanguis †,' instead of 'einiger gefanguis ‡,' to be inserted surreptitiously in the treaty.

The Duke de Choiseul was full of these unworthy practices. The language he adopted in his diplomacy was, therefore, replete with ambiguities. Those he introduced into the subject of epochas and compensations (during the administration of Lord Chatham) he confessed, afterwards, were employed, that the allies might not thoroughly understand the subject in hand; that he might ascertain strictly whether the king of Great Britain actually desired a peace or not; and if it should appear in the negative, that the ambiguities introduced might furnish him with a retreat. He confessed all this; and posterity, for such confession, are under in-

\* Vid. Mosheim.

† A perpetual prison.

‡ Any prison.



finite obligations to him. We owe him, as it were, a thousand ingots of gold.

When Mr. Fox inquired of George III., whether it would be agreeable to him to receive a minister from America, his Majesty replied :—‘ The phrase of your question, Mr. Fox, rather surprises me ; it cannot be agreeable to me ; but I can and do agree to it.’ Mr. Fox, however, had an extraordinary power of simplification. He undressed everything ; and left it naked for all who wished to see. Thurloe’s papers, too, are unparalleled for precision and clearness. Indeed, they throw transparency over the affairs of Europe, during the whole time in which he was secretary ; and this quality, also, distinguished Frederick the Great, who always wrote, if we may credit the Count Guibert\*, with a precision wholly unknown in diplomacy ; an art, he assures us, that, in his time, consisted in drowning the sense in phrases, wrapping them in obscurity, and clothing every thing in mystery, the better to take advantage of ambiguous expressions in case it should be necessary.

In all previous assemblages of the notables, the members of the three estates sat in three different chambers ; and Necker, having assembled them without stating in the edict, that they should meet in three bodies, gave rise to the idea that they ought to meet in one. And this idea being sanctioned by a large majority of the third estate, gave rise, also, to the summons of that body to the other two to sit in debate with them ; and some of the nobility and clergy, having answered

\* *Eloge du Roi de Prusse*, p. 71.


that summons, the legislators, from that time, assumed the title of the 'Assemblée Nationale.' All this arose from a wilful or neglectful want of precision on the part of M. Necker.

The first Lord Holland was nearly being visited with a censure of the House of Commons, for writing to certain members of Parliament, requesting their attendance on the first day of session; when, he said, he should be able to make up his mind, whether he would accept the office of Secretary of State, and take upon him the 'conduct of the House of Commons;' instead of 'his Majesty's affairs' in the House of Commons.

A word ('equal') prevented a meeting between Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Portland; upon which a junta, at the St. Alban's Tavern, came to a resolution, that having heard, with concern, that an interview between the Duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt was prevented by a doubt respecting a single word, they were unanimously of opinion that it would be no dishonourable step, in either of the parties, to give way; more particularly as it might be advantageous to the public welfare. The word 'equal,' however, prevailed; for the parties could not be allured to meet, notwithstanding it was wished and recommended even by the king himself.

In later times, nay, only a short time since, a misconception of a phrase in a letter prevented the Duke of Wellington from forming a part of the Canning administration. Thus, too, when Lord Eldon argued\*, that the church of England, combined with the state, formed together the constitution of Great Britain, and that the

\* April 21, 1828.



Test and Corporation Acts were necessary to the preservation of that constitution, Lord Holland, with great force, argued, that the constitution consisted in the power of the King, Lords, and Commons, to make laws and statutes ; not that the statutes, when so made, were the constitution. And when Lord Lyndhurst, then recently appointed Chancellor, applied the term ‘ mischievous ’ to one of his predecessor’s amendments, he did it in a manner so ambiguous, that Lord Eldon thought he meant it to apply to his intentions. ‘ If I should be ‘ called immediately to lay down my life,’ answered his Lordship, with great indignation, ‘ I should do as I am ‘ now doing ; satisfied that I never meant anything mischievous to my country. It is an imputation which I ‘ do not deserve, and which I throw back on him who ‘ made it ; and throw back with the scorn belonging to ‘ a man who is injured by even the suspicion.’ The fact was, that Lord Lyndhurst meant, that Lord Eldon’s proposition was mischievous ; not that he had a mischievous intention in moving the proposition.

With many persons words are merely words : with others, however, they are things. To use words, then, with propriety, and with effect, must ever be the province and the ambition of a wise man ; more particularly as, in certain stages of society, the majority of nations, as well as of persons, are governed more by words \* than they are by deeds.

\* The most comprehensive law-maker (in respect to precision) appears to have been Merlin of Douay ; the framer of the law against suspected persons : ‘ a spider’s web,’ says Sir W. Scott, ‘ which was so widely extended, that no fly was insignificant ‘ enough to escape its meshes.’

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Let us now turn to the want of precision in morals and theology.

The Latin word 'sacra' is sometimes used for sacred, and sometimes for accursed. Thus Virgil, stigmatizing avarice, says, 'Auri sacra fames\*.' The word 'crimen,' made use of by the Roman emperors in the rescripts, not having been defined, multitudes of Christians suffered. Being, however, at length, defined more clearly by Antoninus Pius, cruelty and injustice for the period ceased. Trajan, by an unprecise answer to Pliny, in respect to the Christians, too, caused many errors. 'O sententiam!' exclaims Tertullian, 'O sententiam necessitate confusam!'

The scriptural allegorical writers attributed various meanings to every phrase. Some ascribed three, some four, some five, and Angelome of Lysieux even seven; as we learn from his commentaries on the book of Genesis, and the preface to his commentary on the book of Kings.

Give me that creed, which, though it may require the longest line to fathom, may yet be so transparent, that, like the clearest lake in Mexico and Peru, all who will take the trouble may see to the bottom.

How many disputes, and even wars, have arisen out of the obscurity of theological terms and phrases! The word 'transubstantiation,' for instance, which Innocent III. introduced into the church, and which, a few years after, was altered by John Pungens Asinus into 'consubstantiation.' What a senseless war of words, extending into persecution, did these unfortunate terms occasion! \*

\* Æneid, lib. iii. 56.

*But in this case the errors imported an  
irreconcilable difference of religious  
faith. J.W.S.*

The dispute, whether the early Christians had, or had not, churches, might have been settled in one moment, by the consideration that a house, or part of a house, may be esteemed a church, if used only for religious purposes.

Many are of opinion, that the violent contention between Nestorius and Cyril \* arose out of the improper use of words only; and that the faith of the condemning and of the condemned was, in reality, one and the same. The like may be asserted † in respect to the arguments between the Eutyches and Monophysites in the fifth century, and between Luther and Huber in the sixteenth. Indeed, Ammonius wisely maintained, that the great principles of all religious truth differed mainly from each other only in the method of expressing them. For many centuries, popes, priests, monks, and ecclesiastical writers, guarded themselves from definitions, as if they thought the greatest evil that could befall them was to be clearly understood. Calvin, in the same manner, expressed himself so loosely, obscurely, and inconsistently, in respect to the eucharist, that not only Bossuet ‡, but Courayer §, and several other writers, have insisted, that his sentiments coincided, almost entirely, with those of the Roman church.

A few words now in regard to philosophical terms. All subjects, relating to metaphysics, are extremely difficult, from the circumstance, that most of the words

\* Vid. Luther de Consiliis, tom. viii. p. 265, 273.

† Asseman. Biblioth. Orient., tom. ii. p. 291.

‡ Histoire des Variations des Eglises Protestantes.

§ Examen des Défauts des Théologiens.

employed to express the operations of the mind, are borrowed, and must, of necessity, be so, from objects cognizable only by the senses. But this is not all. What we do not comprehend clearly cannot be expressed clearly. For this reason metaphysicians have been compelled to write in a manner, as if they did not understand themselves; at least, as if they were apprehensive that their readers would not understand them. Hence their conciseness obscures their ideas, and their diffuseness embarrasses them. There is another difficulty—metaphysical terms admit neither of number nor of mensuration. To be a Livy in metaphysics is a vain attempt. Every problem becomes an enigma. Some metaphysicians, however, seem determined not to be understood. They indulge in transposition, as if desirous of never coming to the point; seizing upon distant analogies, and deducing conclusions too subtle to be grasped.

Many men in common life follow this example. They form ambiguous sentences, and fortify themselves, as it were, behind the obscurity of words; and have as much to say on the wrong side as they have upon the right. Logis, according to Aristotle, made the most perplexed affairs easy by a grace in treating them, while Sygeus threw light on points the most abstruse, by reducing them to elements. Some have more reading than knowledge; others more knowledge than reading. Some read and observe, collect and study, all the days of their lives, to little or no theoretical, much less practical, purpose. Others, comprehensive by nature, and made still more so by observation, will not descend, as they

call it, to study books. Thus, halting as it were between two faculties, and neutralizing both as to the accomplishment of noble purposes.

Bacon tritely remarks\*, that a false and improper imposition of words puts all things in confusion, and leads men into endless labyrinths of subtilty and controversy; hence Voltaire might well exclaim, 'Define your terms!' Des Cartes had determined the force of a moving body by the velocity of its motion. Leibnitz (1686) publicly announced this to be an error; insisting, that the force of a moving body is not proportional to its velocity simply, but to the square of its velocity. The mathematical world rose in arms: some in defence of Des Cartes; others in favour of Leibnitz. The most illustrious philosophers of the age took opposite sides. The dispute lasted thirty years! At length it terminated: and in what manner? by some one's sagely discovering, that the two parties differed chiefly in words. They both arrived at the same results, let the mechanical problem be what it might. Their opinions were, in fact, the same. They only expressed them in a different manner: and their misunderstanding arose merely out of the circumstance of ascribing generally to propositions, which were true only in particular cases. By this remarkable circumstance,—remember, the dispute lasted thirty years,—we may judge well the use and importance of precision. If men would but define, at the outset of an argument, how many fatal and lasting quarrels would be nipped in the bud!

\* *Novum Organum*.

What wordy battles have arisen, too, out of so small an event as the use or disuse of a diphthong! Thus the argument, whether the Son resembled the Father, or was a part of him, arose out of the word ‘homooou-sion,’ or ‘homoiousion.’ To this inordinate folly Boileau might well allude in the ‘Equivoque.’

‘D’une syllable impie un saint mot augmenté,  
Remplit tous les esprits d’aigreurs si meurtrières  
Tu fis dans une guerre et si triste et si longue  
Perir tant de Chrétiens, martyrs, d’une dipthongué.’

If, says Condillac, we had called the ‘infinite’ the ‘indefinite,’ we should have avoided the error of imagining, that we have a positive idea of infinity: and if, we may add, ecclesiastical writers had used the plain language they saw exemplified in the Testament, Christianity had never been divided into three hundred and sixty sects.

#### CV.

##### WHO ARE IGNORANT OF THEIR OWN WRITINGS.

I HAVE known many,—among the rest one a writer on geography,—who scarcely knew the longitudinal difference between the Brazils and Peru. Goldsmith, also, is said to have been of this number. ‘He trans-planted knowledge,’ said Johnson to Boswell, ‘from one place to another; but, as it never settled into his mind, he could not tell what was in his own books.’

Preeminence in literature is now more difficult than ever; and this leads me to a passage in Voltaire. ‘Original genius,’ says he, ‘occurs but seldom, where

‘ the literary taste is formed. The number of cultivated  
 ‘ minds which there abound, like the trees in a thick  
 ‘ and flourishing forest, prevent any single individual  
 ‘ from rearing his head far above the rest. It is be-  
 ‘ cause there is much light, and much cultivation in  
 ‘ France, that we are led to complain of the want of  
 ‘ superior genius.’ If such were the case in the age of  
 Voltaire, D’Alembert, and Diderot, how much more so  
 is it now in respect to our own !

## CVI.

## WHOSE OPINIONS WE VALUE ONLY IN PART.

THERE are some men, whose opinions we do not in  
 the least value when they are in opposition to ours, but  
 which we value very highly when in coincidence with  
 them. In this class, I think, we may include such men  
 as Napoleon, Talleyrand, the Abbé Sieyès, Lord —,  
 the late Earl of —, the present Marquess of —,  
 and many others whom it would not be expedient to  
 mention.

## CVII.

## WHO HAVE ELEGANT MANNERS, BUT VULGAR MINDS.

CHESTERFIELD was the disciple, as it were, of Roche-  
 foucault. He had, originally, a vulgar mind. Cultiva-  
 tion chastised it, ambition polished it, and manners  
 disguised it ; but he died, as he had lived, cursed with  
 the gangrene of a vulgar mind, that is, a worldly mind.

Chesterfield had a perfect knowledge of certain indi-  
 viduals, and those connected with them ; but he had

not sufficient mental compass to judge strictly any thing complicated ; much less man. He improved the manners of his age ; but neither its mental capabilities nor its moral practice. Perhaps he deteriorated both : at least, this much is certain ; that a youth, who takes Chesterfield for his guide, will run great danger of being little better than a smooth, insidious, half-repenting scoundrel.

He has some excellent precepts in regard to manners ; but even these were given to Greece more than two thousand years ago. I do not accuse Chesterfield of having read one passage in Aristotle during his whole course of manhood ; but, had he done so, he would, no doubt, have been struck with amazement at beholding the best part of his philosophy in a passage of the Stagyrte.

Chesterfield was specious, plausible, and penetrating ; with conversation not only brilliant, but frequently solid. His action, we are told, was dignified, and his eloquence mellifluent ; yet, occasionally, deficient in argument ; therefore deficient in strength\* ; at times indicating a plausible and empty elegance, like double-distilled lavender water ; but he had not that pre-eminence of art, that could prompt him to enlist manners and conduct on the true side of virtue.

Pride, rank, and circumstance, prevented Chester-

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\* Johnson was, one day, looking at an edition of Chesterfield's works. 'Here,' said he, laughing, 'here are two speeches ascribed to him, both of which were written by me ; and the best of ' it is, they have found out that the one is like Demosthenes and ' the other like Cicero.'

field's knowledge of any other species of men than what are to be seen in courts and drawing-rooms; nor would he have had so much leisure even to know those, had not the Duchess of Marlborough left him a legacy of twenty thousand pounds. As to the innateness of his good breeding, it may, perhaps, be suspected; since, though he could treat servants with politeness, he could, occasionally, be insolent, when he could be so with impunity. His wit, too, was often directed at good men.

Walpole and Johnson are very severe upon this personage. The latter pronounced him a lord among wits, and insists that his letters teach the morals of a strumpet and the manners of a dancing-master. The former (Walpole) declares of his administration in Ireland, that it was so popular, that nothing was so much cried up as his integrity. Whereas, 'he would have laughed 'at any one,' says he, 'who really had any confidence 'in his morality.' Thomson, however, adorns him with every virtue, and celebrates him as having been

' The guardian, ornament, and joy  
Of polished life.'—*Winter*, 656.

And yet, what was the extent of his policy and comprehension?—To guard himself, and to keep himself perpetually on the watch to profit by the passions and errors of others. He courted the mistress of his master, was ambitious of distinction, and yet acquired no advance in the peerage, nor any great accession to his private fortune. Were we permitted to compare him to a fruit, the fruit, selected, might be a China orange.



## CVIII.

WHO ADMIRE NO ONE WHOM THEY CHANCE TO SEE OR TO  
KNOW.

A MYRIAD of persons,—especially the more conceited of the young,—desirous of appearing wiser than their associates, affect to admire nothing, and to esteem few worthy of knowledge. No one is admired whom they chance to see; none respected whom they chance to know. With these, always, ‘*presentia minuit famam.*’ Can this folly be distinguished by any other designation than as an ignorant and feeble species of impertinence?

## CIX.

THE MANNER IN WHICH SOME JUDGMENTS ARE FORMED.

‘ Pearls are no pearls when coxcombs find them.’

*Winstanley.*

TERTULLIAN and Justin Martyr entered into controversy with the Jews; and yet were ignorant not only of the language of the Jews, but of their learning and history. They, nevertheless, assumed to come to right conclusions.

In regard to painters,—who but must admire the masterly delineations of Salvator Rosa? Yet Fuseli\* handles them with a daring and almost insolent hand. Who can imagine the creations of Tasso without a feeling of delight, or listen to the intonations of Handel and Mozart without transports of admiration? Yet the

\* Lect. ii. 77. 4to.

finest genius that ever graced the earth\* esteemed poetry a mass of ingenious nonsense ; and music worthy of observation only, but as it respects the elasticity of the fingers. If most men do wrong, not for the sake of wrong, but from mistaking wrong for right ; men often judge in the same manner. They regard those who have no ear for music as ‘ fit for stratagems and treasons ;’ as Lord Arundel thought, that no one, ignorant of the art of design, could ever be honest.

In Addison’s time it was a common practice with commentators to bring together a few loose quotations from Homer, Sophocles, Virgil, Horace, and other writers ; and upon their authority erect hypotheses, in no way consistent either with reason or common sense. To ridicule this practice, Pope and Arbuthnot wrote something to prove that all learning was derived from the monkeys of Ethiopia. Is it, or is it not, the common custom of civilized life to do the same in respect to judgments ? A few insulated facts, a few insulated opinions, these are the materials on which most men build the structure of their opinions. They even remind us of the Bishop of Arras, who pretended to the rank of a statesman ; and yet confessed, that he had never read a newspaper for many years. And here we may, also, remember with advantage, that Pontano confessed †, that, after much trouble, he discovered that those who attempt to wash the face of an ass, lose not only their soap but their labour and time.

We may discover how far prejudice may warp, and

\* Newton.

† In Asino.

even paralyze the mightiest minds, from the circumstance of Dante's having consigned all those men, women, and even infants, to a department of the lower regions, for no crime or vice, but for not having undergone the ceremony of baptism! These are represented as making the air tremble with sounds of grief, and as living, without hope, in a perpetual fever of desire to mount the steps of Paradise. Is not this libelling the spirit, rather than analyzing the precepts, of the Christian law?

‘ Judge we by NATURE? Habit can efface,  
Interest o’ercome, or policy take place.  
By ACTIONS? Those uncertainty divides.  
By PASSIONS? These Dissimulation hides.  
OPINIONS? They still take a wider range;  
Find, if you can, in what you cannot change.  
Manners with fortunes, humours turn with climes,  
Tenets with books, and principles with times.’

*Pope, Ep. i. 166.*

Mr. Fox always argued for the existence of an appellative jurisdiction on what he called a philosophical principle—the first principle of human wisdom,—‘ a consciousness of infirmity.’ And this may remind one of what Mrs. Montague said in a letter to the Duchess of Portland in respect to Dr. Young: viz., that he saw how one vice connects another, till, made up of ten thousand bad qualities, man grew to be a social creature, ‘ tolerable to live with by the eternal art of ‘educing good from ill.’

## CX.

## WHO ADMIRE WHAT THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

CHAPMAN'S Homer, Hesiod, and Musæus, enjoyed no inconsiderable reputation for many years ; but then it was only with those who were unacquainted with Greek. 'The boys that grind my colours,' said Apelles to one of the priests of Diana, 'look upon you with respect, while you are silent, because of the gold and purple of your garments ; but when you speak of what you do not understand, they laugh at you. The more abstruse and difficult things seem, the more they raise a blockhead's admiration.'

This is certain : a wise man admires nothing he does not understand ; except, indeed, the mysterious works and operations of Nature. Those, who endeavour to excite the admiration of blockheads, bear some resemblance to what Abelard says of Anselm\*.

Many men, on the contrary, are there, who despise great things, merely because they have not the capacity, or the opportunity, of understanding them. It even extends to persons who have enjoyed no small share of celebrity ; some of whom are curiously ignorant of what all the world would give them credit for knowing.

\* 'Every one who consults him,' says he, 'goes away more perplexed than he came. He has a great flow of words, forming a contemptible sense ; his tree, consisting wholly of leaves, looks beautiful at a distance ; but those who approach find it unfruitful ; and whenever he attempts to light a fire to illumine his house, he fills it with smoke.'

Thus Scaliger was so little acquainted with physics,  
that he insisted,


‘ That, in twelve hundred years and odd,  
The sun had left its ancient road,  
And nearer to the earth is come,  
’Bove fifty thousand miles from home.’—*Butler*.

## CXI.

WHO VALUE MEN NO LONGER THAN THEY AGREE WITH  
THEM IN OPINION.

MANY act by their friends and acquaintances, as St. Jerome did by Pelagius. While the worthy father entertained opinions consonant with his own, Pelagius, in the estimation of St. Jerome, was a model of every earthly virtue. But the moment in which the saint discovered the contrary, then the excellent Pelagius was addicted to gluttony and intemperance ; and the worthy Jerome took pleasure in catching at every thing to construe injuriously. This leads me to consider the opinion of M. de la Colombière, in respect to one of the most religiously execrable men that ever disgraced and contaminated the earth—Simon de Montford.

During the reign of Philip II. in Spain and the Netherlands, more than forty thousand persons died on the scaffold, for the sake of their religion ; while Simon de Montford, the most atrocious of abbots, warring on the Albigenses, on account of their heresies, as he was pleased to style their opinions, caused sixty thousand of them to be slaughtered within the walls of Beziers ! He was, at length, himself killed,



under the walls of Thoulouse : on which his biographer, Mons. de la Colombière, honestly exclaims\*,—‘ Thus fell  
 ‘ this valiant, wise, and worthy man, deserving of a better  
 ‘ fate. So ardent was his zeal, so pure his devotion,  
 ‘ that we may compare him to the flames arising from  
 ‘ the sacred incense ; the first and latest sparks of which  
 ‘ perfume and grace the altars of the Deity.’ Let us  
 return thanks to the Deity, that he now permits his  
 attributes to be more religiously understood.

## CXII.

## WHO MAY BE KNOWN BY THEIR SUBJECTS.

‘ What boots it, that the pen its moral lessons hold,  
 If in the writer’s life a different tale is told?  
 What is it, though the tongue pours wisdom’s best inventions,  
 If deeds break wisdom’s laws, in spite of her pretensions?’

*Camphuizen: Anon.*

WE may know some men, in some degree, by their letters ; others by the subjects on which they write. Thus we have no small insight into the character of the Marquis of Feuquières, who wrote a book on the mistakes committed by French generals. This production excited so much indignation among his military contemporaries, that the Marquis was said to have been one of the bravest men of his times, since he slept soundly though surrounded by a hundred thousand enemies.

The mental value of Albertus Magnus, too,—can it not be estimated by the circumstance, that he wrote

\* Vide Chatelur, ii., 80. In notis.

twenty-four chapters on such subjects as these? ‘Did the angel Gabriel appear to the Virgin in the shape of a serpent, a dove, a man, or of a woman?’ ‘Did he appear young or old?’ ‘What was his dress?’ ‘Were his garments white or of two colours?’ ‘Was his linen clean or dirty?’ ‘Did he appear in the morning, at noon, or in the evening?’ ‘What was the colour of the Virgin’s hair?’ And other equally trivial and unanswerable questions.

The intellectual powers of an author may certainly, and generally to the very edge of the circumference of the circle, be estimated by his writings: not so either his opinions, his principles, his religion, or his morals. All these may be successfully disguised; want of ability never can.

Some writers infuse their own characters in so vivid a manner into their works, that Bayle insists that we may know the relative ages of many, as much by their pens as we can by their faces.

Painters and sculptors,—may they, too, be known by their subjects?—In many instances, certainly so. The chief excellence of Breughel, for instance, consists in delineating the actions of boors and peasants, country feasts, and debaucheries. He was sure, let him paint what he would, to intermingle something low, ludicrous, or facetious. Adrian Brauwer also was characterized by the subjects he painted; viz., young prodigals decoying country girls, drunken quarrels, sots with pipes in their mouths, sharpers playing at dice, and clowns beating their wives. What you admire, we laugh at and, perhaps, despise.

Shall we turn to Tempesta? I have seen his portrait. He had an open countenance. There is nothing of a murderer to be seen in it. Yet he caused the assassination of his wife; and, during his imprisonment, drew a multitude of analogous pictures. Sketches and copies of all or most of these I have seen; and for the better illustration, I shall set down the subjects of many of them.

Lashing with stripes,	Burpings in the side,
Tearing out teeth,	Drownings,
Lashing of women,	Heads bleeding,
Beating with cudgels,	Tearing out bowels,
Whippings,	Executions,
Devouring by wild beasts,	Stabbing in the bosom,
Parturitions,	Dying animals,
Suicides,	Battles,
Stabbings,	Sieges and storming of
Cutting off heads,	towns,
Burning live bodies,	Burning of cities,
Burning out eyes,	Throwing into the sea from
Stretching on racks,	rocks,
Tearing breasts with pincers;	Insatiable hunger.

To these may be added Niobe, the destruction of Polydore, the immolation of Polyxena, the violation of Philomela, Arachne's transformation, Juno addressing the Furies, the destruction of Pentheus, and Apollo flaying Marsyas. His reliefs also are of an analogous cast;—Actæon, Cadmus, Hercules and Cerberus, Theseus and the Minotaur, Medusa, boxings, wrestlings, and boar hunts.

Now turn to a milder genius. Gainsborough loved the flute and violin, but could never tolerate a harpsi-



chord or a piano-forte. He played by ear ; never having had sufficient application to learn notes. As the manners of painters influence the style of their works, I have sometimes fancied that I have seen this want of application even in Gainsborough's landscapes ; but this, perhaps, is mere imagination.

Who does not recognise in the triumphs, dances, antique revelry, of Nicholas Poussin, blended as they are with characters of a nobler nature, the vivacity, the affectionate manners, the innocent life, the agreeable conversation, and the perseverance against fortune, which distinguished that excellent artist ? This, too, may be all imagination ; but certain I am, that the characters of Titian, Michael Angelo, Correggio, and Salvator Rosa, may be read in some, if not in all, of their works.

I should not, however, judge Titian from his Prometheus chained to Mount Caucasus, his Tityus gnawed by vultures, his Sisyphus rolling the stone, or his Tantalus endeavouring to drink ; since he has a thousand others to neutralize the effects of those. Nor should I judge Julio Romano from his Giants endeavouring to scale Heaven, or from that where, in the representation of a prison, the captives are put to death in various manners ; but I think some knowledge of the character of Paul Veronese may be gathered not only from the general cast of his subjects, but from the circumstance that most of his pictures are embellished with galleries and columns, balconies and balustrades, arms, cups, and vases, with banquets and festivals, enlivened with persons habited in noble and splendid dresses.

## CXIII.

WHO CONVERT VICES INTO VIRTUES AS LONG AS THEY ARE FRIENDLY, BUT WHO TURN WHEN THEY CEASE TO BE SO.

MEN convert our vices into virtues, as long as they are friendly with us, or rather, as long as they hope to profit by us ; but the moment the wheel whirls a little way down, our virtues are turned into vices. When Sir Robert Walpole\*, for instance, was confined in the Tower, after having been expelled the parliament, he was visited by the Duke of Marlborough, Lords Godolphin, Sunderland, Somers, and even by Mr. Pulteney ; but when he afterwards did not pursue the course some of those persons desired, they turned round, and reproached him for the very crime of which they had before absolved him.

Zschokke has a passage in reference to some republicans of Switzerland, the truth of which is confined neither to Switzerland nor even to republicans themselves :—‘ Glorious names and lofty pretensions served ‘ only to conceal narrow views and mean actions.’

## CXIV.

WHO DROWN ALL MERIT IN OTHERS FOR ONE FAULT.

MANY,—nay multitudes,—lose sight of all the qualities by which a fine mind may be distinguished, in the contemplation of one vice or even one error. They would hide the glory of the sun with a blade of henbane or hem-

\* Coxe. Mem. Walpole, i., 67. 8vo.

lock. Thus Kepler, the profound Kepler, was despised of many, for having thought that a circle is composed of an infinite number of triangles, having their vertex in the centre, and their infinitely small bases in the circumference. Suppose him to have been wrong, ought they to have forgot his discovery of the square of the distances? The fact is, they envied him; and I never remember this, but I call to mind Falconet's statue of Peter the Great, where that hero is represented ascending a rock on horseback, crushing envy in the form of a snake, in his endeavour to reach the summit. But, alas! Kepler lived in trouble, and died in the midst of a multitude of inconveniences.

When I say I am reminded of Peter the Great, I hope you will give me credit for being well aware of the difference,—the almost immeasurable distance,—that subsists between a hero and a philosopher.

## CXV.

## WHO CONDEMN FOR DOING AND NOT DOING.

WE are sometimes condemned for saying and not saying, thinking and not thinking, doing and not doing; all, as it were, in one breath! Thus Locke's term *idea*, which, as he justly contended, was a word more fit than *notion*, and not in the least more liable to be abused, was condemned by some for being new, and by others for being old. Lord Clarendon, in the same manner, was blamed for what he did, and for what he did not; and his enemies extended the benevolence even to the loading him with reproaches for errors, evil deeds, and evil thoughts, committed and entertained by themselves.

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## CXVI.

WHO ADOPT ONE RULE, AND APPLY IT TO ALL OCCASIONS.

FEW men have succeeded well in the higher departments of life (barring accidents and windfalls unexpected), who have not been wakeful, at taking advantage of critical opportunities; yet buying a dukedom by the sale of a vote is not succeeding, I think, so well as an honest and honourable man could wish. Many persons, however, respect only one rule of policy—‘Mount:’ and this they apply to every occasion in life. ‘Mount!—if possible, ten steps at a time.’ In attempting this, however, they sometimes fall so ludicrously as almost to excite the laughter even of Despair.

## CXVII.

WHO ARE APPRECIATED ACCORDING TO RANK.

BECCARIA insists, that it is necessary to be strictly informed, in order to ascertain the intention of any one, what was the actual impression of objects on our senses, and what the previous disposition of our minds\*; because both these vary not only in different persons, but in the actor himself, and that with a velocity commensurate to the succession of his ideas, passions, and circumstances. Can any reasonable man doubt this? And yet, if men have one characteristic in judgment

\* ‘Questa (l’intenzione) dipende dalla impressione attuale degli oggetti, et dalla precedente disposizione della mente: esse variano in tutti gli uomini e in ciascun uomo colla velocissima successione delle idee, delle passioni, e delle circostanze.’—*Dei Delitti e delle Pene*.

more than another, it is the haste and superficial grounds on which they judge. How often, too, are men's appreciations connected with the rank of those, appreciated! Thus, at Holyrood—

‘ Long had the bard, with hopes elate,  
Sung to the low, the gay, the great;  
But nor his notes of soothing sound,  
Nor zealous word of bard renowned,  
Might those persuade, *that worth could be*  
*Inherent in such mean degree.*  
But when the smile of sovereign fair  
Attested genuine nature there,  
Throbb’d high with rapture every breast,  
*And all his merit stood confess’d \*.*’

## CXVIII.

WHO RESEMBLE AND YET ARE SELDOM ASSOCIATED.

SABELLICUS resembled Tiberius in two particulars. He could see in the dark; and his condition, during the last years of his life, is described by Paul Jovius and Pierius Valerian, as that of Tiberius is by Suetonius and Tacitus. During the reign of Caligula, to save his life, Claudius affected the part of a fool; and in this resembled the elder Brutus. In one respect, Caligula resembled David; both having sawed their enemies in two. Claudius, in one respect, resembled Solomon. A woman denied her own son. Claudius commanded them to be married. Struck with horror at the command, she confessed the truth, took, and maintained him.

Galba, too, may, in one instance, be associated with

\* Hogg's *Queen's Wake*, p. 140.

Solomon ; for two persons having claimed a heifer, and many witnesses having appeared on both sides, Galba caused the heifer to be led with his head covered to the place where it watered. Here they took off the hood, and the emperor decreed it to belong to that person into whose field it went after it had done drinking. Perhaps the reader remembers the circumstance recorded in the Talmud, relative to the Queen of Sheba and the cluster of bees. A knowledge of natural history is sometimes very useful in courts of judicature.

Titus and Hadrian resembled each other, in desiring that every one should retire from their presence cheerful, contented, and happy. Leo X. often expressed the same desire.

The emperor Carinus, Charlemagne, and Henry VIII. may also be associated. Charlemagne divorced several wives ; Henry VIII. treated his in a manner but too well remembered ; Carinus had nine wives, and divorced them all.

Many resemble and yet are seldom associated. Ariosto and Wieland, for instance ; Alexander and Kouli Khan.

Ariosto and Wieland were familiar and yet sublime ; pathetic, yet grotesque. Alexander and Kouli Khan had daring conceptions, firmness of purpose, quickness of dispatch, and unshaken confidence in themselves.

These personages would be often associated in our mental laboratories, were not Wieland a German and Kouli Khan a barbarian. Greece and Italy are always present to our imaginations : Germany and Persia require more labour to think of.

## CXIX.

## WHO ARE LIKE ONLY IN ONE THING.

THE dog, the wolf, the jackall, and the corsac\*, are all modifications of the same species; their resemblances, therefore, are multitudinous.

Certain blues and greens by candle-light are frequently taken for each other. The one is blue, the other green, nevertheless.

Sir William Wadd†, to whom we owe ‘Rider’s Dictionary,’ ‘Hooker’s Polity,’ and ‘Gruter’s Inscriptions,’ and who was removed from the governorship of the Tower to make way for Sir Gervase Elways, who murdered Sir Thomas Overbury in the reign of James I., kept a friend to admonish him whenever he saw any thing amiss in his conduct. This associates him with Philip of Macedon.

Sargon resembles Cardinal de Retz‡ and Madame de Beverweert§; he never sleeps so well as when under affliction. If Cardinal de Carbonne resembled|| Catherine de Medicis in having an antipathy to the odour of roses, though partial to all other flowers, few women resemble Marshal Suwarrow, in having a strong dislike to looking-glasses.

\* Buffon, v. xiv., 350. Desmolins: *Mém. du Mus. d’Hist. Nat.*, tom. x. 315.

† Granger, i. 276.

‡ Memoirs of Cardinal Retz, iii. 283.

§ St. Evremont, i. 55.

|| Recherches sur les Démons, les Esprits, les Spectres, &c., par Collin de Plancy.

Cosmo de Medici and John de Medici, also, resembled each other in one thing. Though they could play, as it were, on many instruments, they took care to play only on one at a time. Marcilius Ficinus asserts of the former, that neither Midas nor Crassus were more avaricious. The latter was above all disguise; and, therefore, made no secret of the maxim, that a people are enriched by being compelled to pay additional taxes.

Some resemble in character the styles of various architects and painters. This is distinguished by boldness, strength, manliness, and majesty, like Julio Romano; some by delicacy, ease, and elegance, like Correggio; and others by symmetry, and the blending of ornament with beauty, like Palladio. Some converse with great apparent depth; and yet, when analyzed, are found to prove nothing; thereby reminding us of 'Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses,' a work pregnant with ingenuity, labour, and learning; yet illuminated by scarcely one solitary demonstration.

Some men resemble each other in certain points and arguments, and then separate, as it were, to such a distance, as to baffle all attempts to associate them. We may instance Newton and Des Cartes. Two attempts, nevertheless, have been made to reconcile the opposing tenets of these philosophers: the one by Luzac of Leyden; the other by Father Paulian, Professor of Physic in the College of Avignon. It was vain, however, for the latter to entitle his Essay a 'Traité de Paix entre Descartes et Newton.' Their systems never can be reconciled.

Charles V. and Donne (the poet) resembled each other,



also, in one point. Charles, as every one knows, had his obsequies performed previous to his death. Donne, after a similar manner, caused himself to be wrapped in a sheet, like a shroud, up to the head, closed his eyes, and desired an artist to take his portrait in that posture, in order to remind him perpetually of death. Thus the gladiator exhausts

——‘ His mighty heart in one last sigh;  
And rallies all life’s energies to die.’—*Chinnery*.

## CXX.

## WHO MAY BE KNOWN BY THEIR WRITINGS IN GENERAL.

THERE are two methods of writing the lives of artists and authors. One is to exhibit their characters with a view of explaining the merits of their works : the other, to show their characters as authors and artists, with a view of explaining, with greater felicity, their characters as men.

Some authors may be known by their works, almost to minuteness. Of these we may instance Xenophon, the younger Pliny, and Apuleius ; Petrarch, Montagne, Balzac, Bentivoglio, Marmontel, and Rousseau ; Gessner ; Franklin, Burns, Cowper, and Byron.

Some poets, however, are not to be known by their poems. Parnell, for instance. His ‘ Hermit ’ has been far too highly esteemed. The poetry is mediocre ; and the moral inexpressibly vicious. For an angel to steal a cup from a man, because he was hospitable ; to murder the son of his host, because that host loved his son with something more than a father’s general love ; and to drown a servant, that he might not rob his

master, is a lesson in theology not strictly consistent, I think, with the Christian religion\*.

In fact, we cannot know men always by their writings ; much less from detached passages. La Fare wrote history with great severity ; yet, in conversation, he was the mildest and most candid of men. Willing should I be,—nay, I should be proud,—would men judge me, not by my manners, my conversation, or my actions, but by my writings. I dare be sworn as to having always acted as well as I could under pressures, arising out of envy, jealousy, treachery, rapacity, and ingratitude ; losses of money, of time, of hopes, and of exertion ; but when I contemplate the comparative virtues of other men, I hang my head and—blush !

## CXXI.

## WHO CONQUER PREJUDICES.

THE beautiful island of Madeira appears, to distant observers, perpetually enveloped by a cloud. This cloud, at noon, floats like a thin fleece over the summit of the mountain. At night, however, it settles on its head ; and there remains till morning. In North and South Wales the clouds frequently stream up of a morning ; and return at night, sitting on the tops of the mountains like so many night-caps ; leaving clear spaces over the valleys beneath. These appearances have often reminded me of the empire of Prejudice.

It is astonishing how closely men hug, nay even in-

\* The original of this poem may be seen in 'Gesta Romanorum ;' a work to which may, also, be traced the incident of the jewels in Shakspeare's ' Merchant of Venice.'

corporate themselves with, their prejudices ! even though those prejudices may be so inordinately prejudicial as to resemble ‘ those gloomy shadows deep,’

‘ Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres,  
Lingering, and sitting by a new-made grave,  
As loth to leave the body that it loved.’

To encounter a long-established and deep-rooted prejudice requires, sometimes, more courage than it does to face an army of forty thousand men. For some prejudices may be compared to the snows of the north. All markings are lost : and he who travels during a thaw, if once he makes a stop, is swallowed. A soul of divine perspicuity is demanded ; and a perseverance and courage worthy the best and most fortunate of men. If we raise trophies to heroes, we should erect monuments, as high as the pyramids, to those who encounter and conquer prejudices, destructive to the welfare of human society. There are no trophies so well deserved as these ; yet who can point out an instance in which a trophy has ever been granted ?

I remember hearing Mr. Wilberforce state an opinion, that he was convinced that, provided the prejudices of the Hindoos were not insulted, no people in the world would more willingly listen to instruction in religion and manners. How easy it is for zeal to hoodwink knowledge and conquer reason ! To Hindoos prejudices stick so close, that, even when we only attempt to eradicate them,

‘ Torn is the man, and mortal is the wound !’

And this may serve to remind us of a remark by Lord Erskine, in his Speech for the Council of Madras :

‘ Some of the darkest and most dangerous prejudices arise from the most honourable principle of the human mind. When prejudices are caught up from bad passions, the worst of men feel intervals of remorse to soften and disperse them ; but when they arise from a generous though mistaken source, they are hugged closer to the bosom, and the kindest and most compassionate natures feel a pleasure in fostering a blind and unjust resentment.’

One reason why the middle classes are more enlightened than the higher and the lower, arises out of the circumstance, that they have greater opportunities of becoming acquainted with what are prejudices and what are not.

## CXXII.

## COUNTERPARTS.

CONCORDS and discords are sympathies and antipathies. Apelles and Raphael both excelled in beauty and grace ; but Apelles seems to have been master, also, of the sublime ; for his Campaspe and his Venus rising from the sea, were not more admirable in one style, than his Alexander in the character of Jupiter Tonans was in the other. Both artists spoke freely of their own merits ; both were highly agreeable in conversation ; and both were addicted to pleasure ; both keeping mistresses, and exceedingly partial to the society of women. There are, however, no counterparts.

There is a passage in Lopez de Vega, implying that Nature pleases herself in drawing ; but that she does

not invent every day. She grows weary, and copies her own productions. Yet as there are no two portions of any meridian exactly alike; and as it is a well-known truth in mechanics, that the ultimate particles of matter never touch, how shall we expect one man to resemble another, in all particulars? There are, in fact, no real counterparts in any thing; and as an example of this, amongst eminent men, we might refer to that fine passage in Longinus, where he draws a comparison between Demosthenes and Hyperides.

Sir William Jones presented to the Literary Society of Calcutta a treatise on the gods of Greece, Italy, and India; the design of which was to point out a resemblance between the popular worship of the Greeks and Romans with that of China, Persia, Phœnicia, Syria, and other nations. The subject, if pursued, would lead, naturally, to the harmony that might subsist between those nations in point of character and civilization. But as to counterparts, as we said before, there are none.

We all appear to be cast after the same fashion: and so we are; but not in the same mould. Every man's figure and countenance are his own; so, also, is his mind; and so also his various combinations of feeling.

Some one has written, that if a second Bacon should ever arise, he must be ignorant of the first. On the present plan of gradations a second Bacon is an impossible circumstance. Men, to each other, are superior or inferior. There are no equalities. From the beginning of the present system of things, equality has

ever been unknown. Even in the material world, no two objects, not even two petals of the same flower, are strictly alike in colour, form, measure, or weight. It is, therefore, less likely that there should be any circumstances, cases, or even appearances, strictly consonant. As to men,

‘ Man differs more from man, than man from beast.’

Historians have said of Alexander, that he seemed to have been given by a peculiar dispensation of Providence, being like to none other man in the human kind. This implies too little, or too much. There being no fac-similes, his being unlike any other man is no distinction; and his being given by a peculiar dispensation of Providence is no more than may be said of a flood, of a famine, a conflagration, or a pestilence.

What ideas of distant magnitude can he have, whose eye has never traversed a telescope?—of littleness, whose vision has never penetrated a compound microscope?—of a ray of light, who has never beheld its particles divided by a prism?—or of the electric fluid, who has never witnessed the apparent omnipresence of lightning? In the same manner, we can have no true knowledge of any individual till we have seen him in the trials of prosperity, as well as in those of adversity. Those extremes operate not only as telescopes and microscopes, but prisms. They are the grand unmaskers of men: for they strip them almost as naked as when they first issued from their mothers’ wombs.

We are assured\*, that between numerous objects, in

\* Vide Mac Lea: *Horræ Entomologicæ*.

every department of nature, there exist striking coincidences as to external characters ; but that these, so far from proving those objects to be related to each other, show, upon a strict investigation, that they cannot even be placed together in the same natural arrangement \*.

Each individual is individualized ; and men are wise, foolish, small, or great, only in comparison with those around them. Monboddo was nearly as great to his friends at Edinburgh, as Johnson was to his in London. The former, indeed, imitated the latter with such solicitude, that Foote called him an Elzevir edition of him. But I am persuaded, as Ganganelli said in a letter to Abbé Lami, ‘ that the moral world is a copy of ‘ the natural one ; and that there are minds like faces, ‘ which have no sort of resemblance.’ There are men, even, whose vices bear similitude to virtues ; and whose virtues, being carried to excess, bear not only resemblance to vices but to crimes.

Though exact parallel events are unknown upon the earth, yet in the heavens may be noted continual reproductions of the same phenomena, in the same order, and at equal intervals of time.

#### CXXIII.

##### WHO DRAW THEIR OWN PORTRAITS IN THAT OF THEIR ENEMIES.

ROUSSEAU sketched the character of Diderot, and in that sketch delineated himself. This is the passage :—

\* For instances see Linnæan Transactions, vol. xiv. p. 93. 4to.

‘ Although born with a good heart and open disposition, he had an unfortunate propensity to misinterpret the words and actions of his friends ; and the most ingenuous explanations only supplied his subtle imagination with new interpretations against them.’

The practice is very common ; especially with those who accuse others of thoughts and deeds they are guilty of themselves.

## CXXIV.

## WHO FORM THEMSELVES ON MODELS.

METASTASIO, before he began to write, always read some of the best passages in the *Adonis* of Marino\* ; and Geminiani laid the foundation of his musical studies on madrigals †, which Burney pronounces to have neither design, phraseology, melody, nor system. Likings of authors frequently depend less on judgment than on circumstance ; and to this, perhaps, we may refer the preference which Grotius gave to Lucan ; Liberty being the watchword of his age. It is fortunate, however, that most men can select the books they wish to read ; though all have not the felicity to be able to command the company they may wish to keep.

In one important respect authors have an advantage over painters and sculptors. Good books are of easy purchase ; but it is not in all men’s power to contemplate the master-pieces of Raffaele or Correggio, of Titian or Michael Angelo.

\* Carlo Cristini, p. 154.

† By Gesualdo, Principe di Venosa.



Authors frequently select models from their own characters. Lord Byron did so to a considerable extent ; and Madame de Stael confessed as much to Mrs. Inchbald in regard to her characters of Delphine and Corinne. ' I am my own model,' said she.

Painters have many models to copy from ; but the first of models is NATURE. ' Study the great works of ' the great masters for ever,' said Sir Joshua Reynolds. ' Study, too, as nearly as you can, in the order, in the ' manner, and on the principles, on which they studied. ' Study nature attentively, but always with those masters ' in your company ; consider them as models which you ' are to imitate, and at the same time as rivals which ' you are to combat.' This may remind us of an assertion of Passeri, viz., that a painter, who has an ardent desire of learning, receives as much instruction from the works of deceased artists as from living masters.

D'Alembert tells us that Voltaire, in order to improve his taste in prose, kept Massillon's ' *Petit Carême*' perpetually on his table ; and Racine's tragedies, to form his taste in poetry.

Some men form themselves by strict attention to one main rule, and by attachment to some particular authors. Demosthenes was attached to Thucydides, Scipio to Xenophon, and Brutus to Polybius ; Montaigne to Plutarch, Fenelon to the ' *Odyssey*,' Grotius to Lucan, and Montesquieu to Tacitus. Rienzi read Cicero, Livy, Seneca, Cæsar's ' *Commentaries*,' and Valerius Maximus, so often, that he almost got them by heart. Hampden was equally attached to Davila. Lord Chatham was particularly solicitous that

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his son should be well grounded in Thucydides and Polybius ; and he esteemed no book more calculated to give a *copia verborum* than Barrow's sermons. Pope formed himself upon Boileau ; Gibbon upon Grotius and Puffendorf, Locke, Montesquieu, Pascal, La Bletterie, and the ' Civil History of Naples ' by Giannone. Sir William Jones read Cicero's works once a year ; and, though out of chronological order, we may here remark that Columbus formed his plan relative to Cathay from having devotedly attached himself to the Travels of Marco Polo.

Conquerors, also, have selected models. Alexander had an extraordinary veneration for Cyrus ; and he, in turn, has been a Jupiter to a puerile order of persons since. His imitators, in fact, have been exceedingly numerous ; amongst whom we may remember Commodus and Caracalla, one of the Constantines, and Charles XII. As to Marlborough, he imbibed his taste for military life from reading Cæsar's ' Commentaries ' and Vegetius's Treatise ' De Re Militari.'

To revert :—St. Basil formed himself upon St. Athanasius ; and Bossuet, in some measure, upon Pascal. ' I would rather,' said he, ' have been the author of the ' Provincial Letters, than of any work ever written in ' France.' D'Aguesseau goes even so far as to say, that the fourteenth letter is equal to any composition of the antients ; and Monsieur Vauvenarques asserts that it was in the school of Pascal, he became acquainted with the depth and labyrinth of the human heart. ' In ' that of Fenelon,' continues he, ' I learned to encourage it and give it comfort.'

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## CXXV.

## OPEN CHARACTERS.

Tasso lived to know the danger of one; and he complains of the consequences in many letters. His was a life of scrupulosity amid every species of intrigue. He has, therefore, a claim upon our sympathy, whenever we detect him in the indulgence of complaint. But what apology shall those have, who give way to distrust before they have encountered any reasonable cause? Is it that, being ignorant, they feel as if walking in the dark, and therefore are afraid of stumbling at every step? Herbert of Cherbury insists that it is so.

Men of free, frank, and generous natures, who are, at the same time, well acquainted with men and things, indicate their honest competency to cope with circumstances, trials, and intricacies, so well; that we recognise their ability at a first interview, as we do the skill and science of a musician from the manner in which he first strikes the strings of his instrument.

## CXXVI.

WHO ARE SUSCEPTIBLE OF CORRECTION IN RESPECT TO  
NATURAL PROPENSITIES.

WE may instance the Duke of Burgundy, educated by the illustrious Fenelon, and the late Princess Elizabeth of France. But many are the instances in this country exhibitiv of the melancholy fact, that education, so far from improving the natural dispositions of

men, serves, frequently, to enlarge not only the desire, but the sphere, in which to exercise their capabilities of evil.

## CXXVII.

## SELF-CONFESSORS.

'The faults of others I enough have shown;  
'Tis just, at last, that I should tell my own.'

*Boileau, Sat. ix.; Ozell.*

CAN we triumph over our passions? Bandinello, the painter of Florence, candidly confessed that he never spoke well of any one; and Ortensio Lando, the Italian novelist, is said to have had such an appetite for scandal, that, unable even to spare himself, he drew his own portrait in colours so dark, that even those whom he satirized were satiated with revenge. This is being a severe expounder of ourselves indeed!

Horace, Pliny the Younger, Froissart, Montaigne, and Bayle, are delightful writers; were it only for the insight which their pages afford us of their own characters. Yet their confessions are not to be compared with those of Rousseau, who not only resembled Lord Herbert in laying open every defect and foible in his own character, but seems, as I have said before, to have taken pleasure in representing himself worse than he was. We may say the same, I hope, of Cellini.


Many persons become self-accusers when they think it will administer to their own interests. Thus Lord Lauderdale, on the restoration of Charles II., called himself and nation 'a thousand traitors and rebels;'

and frequently said ‘When I was a traitor,’ ‘when I ‘was in rebellion.’ The Earl of Montgomery, also, seldom failed to acknowledge, even to his inferiors, how wrong he had been in offending, and how eager he was for their pardon.

Impartiality in judging of ourselves, of our conduct to others, and of the conduct of others to us, is a useful and an honourable indication, not only of the goodness of the heart, but of the strength of the head. But men and women would much more often confess their foibles, errors, indiscretions, and defeats, were others more able and more willing to appreciate the merit of such concessions. ‘I would yield to the propriety of ‘your arguments,’ they would say, ‘did I not feel that ‘you would be too much elevated by the victory.’ It demands no small degree of virtue, charity, and policy, to be able, publicly or privately, to appreciate a confession.

Youth is much addicted to vapour of manner ; and not youth only ; for some men, as I shall elsewhere be found to observe, presume as much upon their age as others do upon their youth.

I have known few men, who, having done a vile action, but had the hardihood to defend it on detection, in one way or another. But Augustus was politic enough to urge repentance for the crimes and atrocities of Octavius : and here we may remember what Marco Trivisano said to the celebrated historian, Paul Sarpi. ‘You are called the absolute master of your passions ; ‘yet, in my opinion, you have as many as other men, ‘but only they appear under a different form. For



‘ your retirement so constantly to the secret chambers  
 ‘ of the republic, to read such books as you only can  
 ‘ decipher, and the resolution you appear to have formed  
 ‘ never to quit your cell, except when imperiously called  
 ‘ upon to do it, is as much an intemperance as was the  
 ‘ ardent passion I once entertained for gaming and  
 ‘ women ; though they appear different in the eyes of  
 ‘ the world.’ There is no small truth in this : it be-  
 hoves us to pause upon it, therefore ; and to be indulgent  
 to those whose conduct and pursuits may not altogether  
 correspond with our own.

## CXXVIII.

## WHO DRAW THEIR OWN CHARACTERS.

POPE SIXTUS IV., one of the worst men that ever sat  
 in the chair of St. Peter, praised himself immeasurably  
 in the anathema he pronounced against Lorenzo de  
 Medici, whom he presumed to call ‘ the Son of Ini-  
 ‘ quity,’ and ‘ the Heir of Perdition\* ;’ while he was  
 himself all mildness, moderation, and gentleness. This  
 was not self-delusion ; but impudence, blended with  
 the most astounding hypocrisy. Sixtus was of an order,  
 who, in their declamations against the crimes and vices  
 of others, brave the discovery of their own crimes and  
 defects.

‘ They are themselves the great sublime they draw.’

His holiness reminds us of Aretino. This man was

\* Sixtus Papa IV. Iniquitatis filius, et perditionis. Alumnis  
 Laurentius de Medici, &c.

the companion of princes, and lived in no small hope of obtaining a cardinal's hat. Though one of the most infamous men of his age, he was perpetually praising himself, and even adopted the title of 'Il Divino;' and, what is still more extraordinary, was permitted to keep it.

*'Hector.* What art thou—Greek? art thou for Hector's match?

Art thou of blood and honour?

*Thersites.* No, no;—I am a rascal; a scurvy railing knave; a very filthy rogue.

*Hector.* I do believe thee; live.'—*Troilus and Cressida.*

Aretino, in the same manner, is permitted to enjoy the title of 'Il Divino,' because no one thinks him of sufficient consequence to take it away.

Intense self-appreciation goes hand in hand with extended powers of reflection. Modesty is a part of manners.

Petrarch's dialogues with St. Augustine are beautiful; and they let us into the depth of his character with the most explicit minuteness. His 'Confessions,' too, in many other parts of his works, especially his letters, are remarkable for the hold they take of the mind; and I cannot but agree with one of his biographers, that no one, perhaps, ever passed from the earth, leaving so many materials to posterity wherewith to judge of his character.

Rousseau's 'Confessions,' too, are very remarkable. They open a great depth into the anatomy of self. Rousseau had an extraordinary knowledge of his own character; but his knowledge of other men's seems to have

been very contracted. He judged all as he fancied their interest and feelings bore upon his own. He wrote his 'Confessions,' he says, 'that the world might have a 'whole-length portrait of a man.' And this reminds me of an assertion of Cardinal De Retz: 'In my opinion,' says he, 'a man shows himself greater by being capable 'of owning a fault, than by being incapable of committing it.'

Marshal Saxe's confessions are also very curious; and they lead us to remember that Lord Peterborough (the celebrated general) confessed, in his MS. Memoirs, that, before he had attained his twenty-first year, he had committed no less than three capital crimes! What those crimes were, I believe, is nowhere stated; and to his excellent wife, who burnt the pages, his memory is indebted for the concealment.

Confessions, however, are generally very deceptive; they being, for the most part, made merely for effect. Rousseau made himself out a much worse man than he was. No enemy would have dared to speak so ill of him as he has written of himself. I am, therefore, sometimes disposed to think, that confessors are most to be distrusted when they seem to be the most sincere.

One thing is certain: no one can know us in all respects,—however they may in some,—so well as we know ourselves. If we can write, no one can give so full an account of our secret sensations, sentiments, and affections; and no one can state so truly the simple or complicated sources of our thoughts and actions. For

\* Mem., i., 369.



men to speak too explicitly of their virtues, however, is not to be endured. 'Were Montaigne's maxim observed,' says Mr. Hume\*, 'that one should say frankly, I have sense, I have courage, beauty, or wit, as it is sure we think so: were this the case, I say, every one is sensible, that such a flood of impertinence would break in upon us, as would render society wholly intolerable.'

It is, nevertheless, certain that he, who most studies himself, most understands others; and that silence in respect to both is often the better discretion.

## CXXIX.

## WHOSE QUALITIES ARE STRANGELY MIXED.

WE may instance St. Jerome. In the midst of his virtues and zealous labours for the Christian cause, this holy father was of a disposition so prone to censure, that many persons, whose lives were irreproachable, are loudly said † to have been objects of his unjust accusations.

Having mentioned St. Jerome, let us say a few words in regard to St. Augustin, Cyril, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen.

Augustin had a zealous regard to truth, a sincere piety, a subtile wit, an invincible patience, and a sublime genius; and yet his works display ‡ a levity, a precipitation, and a long string of contradictions, not in the least to have been expected from so wise a man, and

\* Essays, ii. 297. † Vide Le Clerc, *Questiones Hieronymianæ*.

‡ Mosheim, vol. i. Cent. iv. part 2.

so celebrated a writer. Cyril was turbulent, litigious, and contentious; jealous, haughty, and imperious. Tertullian had a great genius; yet no great judgment. He was pious, yet superstitious; of a dazzling imagination, yet austere, laboured, and difficult; of great learning, yet credulous. Cyprian had one great merit, viz. that of being able to distinguish truth from falsehood. This, however, it must be confessed, he shared with a multitude of learned and otherwise excellent persons. As to Origen, he was distinguished by zeal and piety, patience, industry, and erudition: wanting little, if we except judgment.

It is a fine thing to be a saint! But if we would form an accurate idea of the virtues which recommended some, more particularly Cajetan, John of Leon, Paschal of Arragon, and John de Dieu, to the honours of canonization, we should turn to Justus Fontaninus\*. We ought not assuredly to exclaim, 'ex uno disce omnes;' but I fear we might almost be justified in exclaiming, 'ex uno disce majores!'

When we see men in many ways, the different aspects we see them from, are apt to confound the reality, though not, perhaps, the purity and rectitude of our judgments; and this reminds me of a Chinese poem, published in the Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society †, a few lines of which strictly apply to the subject in hand.

\* Codex Constitutionum, quas summi Pontifices ediderunt in solemnī Canonizatione sanctorum, p. 260, 261.

† Vol. ii. p. 406. Davis.

‘The tints of the hills are confounded in the distance,  
 As the traveller views them, to the end of his daily journey :  
 The shapes of their peaks and ridges alter with every change  
 of place,  
 Until the lonely wanderer ceases to know their names.’

## CXXX.

## WHO FORM STUDIES.

THERE are some persons, who form studies, as it were, of themselves. These are not the best, nor are they the worst of mankind. They are men of virtue and vice ; blended with all the eccentricity of which the human character is susceptible : Alcibiades, for instance, in former times ; the Duke of Buckingham and the Duke of Wharton, in more recent ones.

Had either of these persons left a faithful record of their acquirements, hopes, wishes, disappointments ; deeds done, and deeds attempted ; with the actions and characters of those with whom they associated, or against whom they were arrayed ; the biographies of Plutarch, and all those in Bayle’s Dictionary and the *Biographia Britannica*, had, perhaps, furnished no studies so entirely acceptable to a true man of the world.

## CXXXI.

## IN WHOM EXTREMES MEET.

‘ Vitium extremis nam semper inhæret.’

*Du Fresnoy, de Arte Graphica, v. 415.*

SOME men are vicious in the extremity to which they would carry those qualities which ought to be virtuous ;

as some plants, which are exquisite in the air, give a perfume so strong in a drawing-room, as to fatigue the olfactory sense altogether. St. Paul said well, when he enjoined his hearers not to be 'righteous over much.' There is, undoubtedly, great vice in it.

Some persons are valued or undervalued more largely than justice warrants; and of this Cardinal Retz may be cited as an example: for of him Tenhove\* says, that it was impossible to esteem him, to fear him, to love him, or to hate him, except to excess.

A feather and a piece of gold fall, in an exhausted receiver, in the same period of time. Some trees and shrubs have a peculiarity, of which, I believe, there are few analogies in any other region of Nature. Plant them in an inverse position, leaves will grow from the roots, and roots from the upper branches of the trunks. These are not the analogous consequences of extremes in worldly characters, or in worldly affairs.

Women are, frequently, not only in extremes; but, if the solecism may be allowed, in the extremity of extremes. It is for this reason, with many others, that Swift said, 'as they are like riddles, in being unintelligible, so they generally resemble them in this; that they please us no longer, when once we know them.' Swift had courage for any thing!

The character of Dionysius the younger would not be worth dwelling upon, were there not, in his fate, remarkable extremes. He had been tyrant of Syracuse more than twenty years; but, being conquered by Ti-

\* Mem. House of Medici, ii. ch. xi.

moleon, and sent to Corinth, he kept a school: and there he exhibited a curious spectacle. For he was sometimes seen \* conversing in a butcher's shop; now sitting in that of a perfumer; now drinking in a tavern; now squabbling in the streets with women of the town; and now instructing young female musicians to sing at the theatre! This is one of the most curious contrasts, in regard to condition, exhibited in history.

Men pass easily, readily, and rapidly, from love to hate; from confidence to distrust; from hope to fear; from pity to indifference. The transitions, however, are not so rapid from hate to love; from mistrust to confidence; from fear to hope; or from indifference to pity. The facility of transition is all, or, chiefly, on one side.

The poets exhibit very curious extremes. Thus there are many passages in Dante and Wieland, that make us laugh and shudder at the same moment. Nations, too, occasionally, bound from one extreme to another. In France the transitions have been from cruelty to humanity; from despotism to anarchy; from bigotry to atheism; from atheism to cant; from cant to religion, wise institutions, public freedom, and, I hope, public happiness.

There is one good in resorting to extremes; and Cardinal Retz alludes to it †;—they are wise, when necessary; and they settle subjects one way or the other.

All extremes of sensation, however, are dangerous, whether of pleasure or of pain. For if the one lead us to lassitude and disgust; the other, but too often, drive us to melancholy and mental ruin.

\* Plutarch.

† Mem. vol. i. p. 178.

## CXXXII.

WHO, BEING INNOCENT, HAVE NO REGARD TO  
APPEARANCES.

AMELIA is a beautiful creature, and an innocent creature ; but she has no regard to appearances. She fancies she may do all things that are innocent. She is unconscious, that from the highest glow of virtuous feeling, some one silent enemy may give a shrug,—

‘ That though she were the snow itself, new fallen,  
Men would believe her spotted \*.’

## CXXXIII.

WHO ARE WRONG IN SENTIMENT ; YET RIGHT IN ACTION.

SOME mathematicians reason justly on false foundations. Analogous orders are more numerous than I choose to calculate. The principles and sentiments of many, for instance, are right ; and yet their actions appear to be wrong. They are led, driven, or they glide into conditions, which they would never have experienced, had they stooped more solicitously to consult expedience.

‘ Thus we may gather honey from the weed,  
And make a moral of the devil himself.’

Some men’s conduct is regulated less by their sentiments than by circumstances ; while many act almost entirely by compulsion. The argument of Erlach was morally wrong ; and yet, practically right. Being

\* Knowles. ‘ The Wife.’ Act iii. sc. 1.

elected to the chief command of the army of Berne, he thus addressed the people :—‘ Six battles have I been engaged in, in which the smaller number have prevailed over numerous armies. Strict subordination alone can insure success. You, who are born free, are naturally impatient of control ; but you will cease to be free, if you refuse to yield, when obedience becomes necessary. With God’s aid and yours, I will dare any multitude ; as we did in the days of my father : but of this be well aware ; I will not be your commander, unless I am invested with absolute authority.’ In difficult times republics may admit the existence of dictators. One man may be erected into a giant, because the majority of persons are little. But the occasion must be urgent, and the period short.

## CXXXIV.

WHO ARE GOOD AT ONE TIME, AND BAD AT ANOTHER.

Not only men are so, but things. Charles, commonly called the Wise, built the Bastile as a castle of defence. What it afterwards became is too faithfully on record. Learning was introduced to support the cause of Christianity ; but in the hands of the subtle it afterwards became an engine of perplexity and confusion. In good hands it again became advantageous ; for it was the greatest accessory for the obtainment of reform from the time of Wickliffe to that of Luther, Huss, and Jerome of Prague.

We may extend examples to sovereigns. Nero and Constantine are instances of sovereigns who were good

at the beginning and detestable at the end ; Augustus and Titus, of those who were good at the end, and infamous at the beginning. It must, however, be confessed, that few men's memories have been safe from accusation.

Pertinax has been accused of corruption by one historian \*, and of having been accessory to a murder by another †. The impartial voice of general history, however, pronounces him equal, in many essential particulars, to Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. No man's memory, in fact, has been safe : even Alfred is accused of having been, in the early part of his reign, immoral and despotic, haughty ‡, and disregardful of the oppressed and indigent §.

## CXXXV.

## WHO DO NEITHER GOOD NOR EVIL.

It is a great mark of mental weakness, when men permit themselves to be drawn back in their attempts to fulfil good intentions. This was so decidedly the opinion of Antonio Guevara, that he even went so far as to assert, that though heaven will be filled with those who have done good works, yet hell will be peopled with those who *intended* to do them.

There are some qualities which vibrate between virtues and vices. They produce neither good nor evil ; reminding us of the groves of Egypt, which have neither flowers, rivulets, nor verdure.

\* Herodian.

† Julian.

‡ Vit. St. Neoti in act. SS. Ben. Sæc. iv. tom. iv. 330, 1.

§ Asser, p. 31, 32. Lingard, i. 181. 4to.



It is easy for those who have good fortunes, no wives, no children, few opportunities for the indulgence of ambition;—it is, in fact, easy for those, who are never tried by the interests or passions of human nature, to be what is styled virtuous; that is, to keep their words, to pay their debts, to be constant at church, and to do no harm. Their complaints and querilities, however, are, perhaps, sins not less great than the deviations of those tried in difficulty and distress.

Dante seems to have had a curious detestation of those who, doing neither good nor evil, live without praise and die without censure. He condemns them, for a time, to the bottomless pit! they are the first persons whom he meets in that dreary region; but Virgil being his guide, he makes that poet exclaim: ‘Say nothing to them. They are alike disdained by Mercy and Justice. Look; and pass them by\*.’ Surely this was rather too severe a punishment. For if men of this kind do us no good, they do us no harm; and to say of a man, ‘he has done me no harm,’ is one good reason for wishing him well.

‘Forgive, then, thou bustler in concerns  
Of little worth, an idler in the best,  
If, author of no mischief, and some good,  
He seek his proper happiness by means  
That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine.’—*Couper*.

That motives are the life and soul of all noble actions has been a canon for appreciators from the time of Plutarch; but those, who *serve* men, will never be loved

\* *Inferno*, cant. iii. 34.

so much as those who *please* them : and this applies with peculiar force to those who want,

—— ‘ As through blank life they dream along,  
Sense to be right, and passion to be wrong.’

*Young. Universal Passion.*

## CXXXVI.

## MEN OF HONOUR ; HONOURABLE MEN.

GENERALLY speaking, few men, after forty, care much for the opinions of others, as long as their worldly affairs thrive. As to what are ludicrously called ‘ Men of honour,’ I shall say little ; men of honour being, in modern acceptance, those who pay their debts of chance \* ; keep a secret in respect to intrigues ; are absurd enough to suffer themselves to be shot at to gratify other men’s folly ; or villains enough, in unworthy causes, to require the blood of an adversary to gratify their own.

Men of honour are very equivocal kind of persons : —honourable men are the glory of society.

Boileau seems to have entertained ideas not much dissimilar. ‘ ’Tis everywhere the same †,’ said he,—

————— ‘ By land or sea ;  
Honour you’ll find the universal plea.  
The cit, who cheats behind his counter board,  
Pretends as much to honour as my lord.’

\* A person, who had lent Mr. Fox a sum of money upon bond under very pressing circumstances, having learned that he had received some money, pressed for payment ; upon which Mr. Fox told him, that he should be happy to do it, but that he was bound to pay some debts of honour. Upon this the creditor thrust his bond into the fire, and said, ‘ Now, Sir, mine is a debt of honour.’

† Sat. xi.

## CXXXVII.

## SELF-CONTRASTS.

CONCEIVE a thought; and its opposite frequently springs up, as it were, side by side. Machiavel might have won the laurel as a writer of comedy, had he not chosen to compile history, to form precepts, and to chastise tyrants: so true is it, that the severest genius is, sometimes, the most alive to humorous representations. Had Machiavel not chosen to deviate from comedy, he had, perhaps, forestalled Falstaff; for if his genius assimilated with that of Tacitus in regard to historic qualifications, his talents were not, in another way, unassociated with those of Rabelais and Cervantes, Butler and Swift.

Some possess talents almost as distant,—speaking by an hyperbole,—as the planet Herschel from the northern wain. Boscovich, for instance, united the elegant with the mathematica<sup>1</sup>; and clothed intricate subjects of theory and calculation in a style\* peculiarly elegant and harmonious. Montuari of Modena had genius and a love of labour to observe, that one hundred changes had taken place in the relative situations of the fixed stars; and yet he was distinguished for a profound knowledge in subjects relating to civil and ecclesiastical jurisprudence. D'Alembert united a strong mathematical genius to an elegant taste for polite literature; but Diderot's brilliancy of thought was frequently lost amid words, to glean a meaning from

\* See *De Solis ac Lunæ Defectibus*.

which is, occasionally, almost as difficult as it is to find a meaning in Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Darwin collected a vast number of useful facts, and made a multitude of observations in his *Zoonomia*, *Phytologia*, *Botanic Garden*, and *Temple of Nature*; yet his pages are deteriorated by eccentricities, scarcely to have been expected from a man who had read Nature largely and intimately in many various details. Locke, a friend to religious liberty, drew up a constitution for the colonists of Carolina so aristocratic, and so little in harmony with his own doctrines in respect to religious liberty, that nothing but discord and confusion resulted from it. William Penn, on the other hand, established harmony and happiness, by keeping faith with the original inhabitants; establishing civil and religious liberty; and instituting courts of arbitration rather than of law.

Cowley, who was so stiff a writer in verse, as sometimes to be disregarding of all harmony, was yet, in prose, placid, easy, and natural. His editor, Bishop Hurd, was, in his writings, all ease, urbanity, and elegance; but in the relations of life he was so distant, that Cradock, who lived near him and knew him well, assures us, that he was not at all admired by those, who did not estimate him in a literary capacity, since he looked with disdain upon all unlearned persons. It could not, therefore, be said of him, as it was of Nicholas Poussin, that ‘though an Athenian in mental refinement, he was a Spartan in his habits of life;’ but that he was a rector, an archdeacon, a bishop. In one particular, too, he resembled a person, with whom he would

have felt petrified at being, in any way, associated—*Helvetius*. For the latter, though all benevolence to pity, to console, and to relieve, maintained with his tenants and dependants the strictest fidelity of feudal rights.

Who could exhibit greater contrast than Lord Herbert of Cherbury? He fought against Charles I.; and yet justified the enormities of Henry VIII. He disbelieved the Christian revelation, and yet dreamed of one made to himself. He quarrelled with punctilios one moment, and redressed wrongs the next; *Plato* to-day, *Hudibras* and a *Quixote* on the morrow. He had also a delicacy of feeling, easily provoked; and yet, in many respects, a strong mind and a philosophic spirit.

Hafiz, the Persian poet, was religious and licentious. Has France and England produced any one equally so? Perhaps not; but we cannot forget, that Baptist Rousseau produced sacred odes and obscene epigrams; and that Thomas Moore is almost equally remarkable for licentious odes and sacred melodies.

Klopstock was divine almost as much in conduct as he was in subject; yet he was a master of humour, if not in print, at least in conversation and correspondence. 'To-day I am in a rapacious humour,' writes he to Gleim\*; 'and I must have a snipe. My reason for this demand is; for the first act of "*David*," one partridge; for the second act, one ditto; for the third act, a snipe. This last act, be it known to you, was begun this morning; and yet is considerably advanced. Therefore a snipe!'

\* Quedlinburgh, Nov. 3, 1763.

The pendulum differs in its movements in different latitudes. No one but a man of exquisite taste should attempt uniting the Greek and Gothic orders in one temple; nor ought any one to lay the seeds of discontent in the bosom of delight. Presumptuous men, however, occasionally do the former, and ignorant ones continually the latter. There are no contrasts here; but Malebranche had a poetical style, yet could never read a page of poetry; he had a philosophical mind, yet was continually embracing hypothesis for truth. And here it may be incidentally observed, that objections in philosophy prove, sometimes, the most decisive arguments for the establishment of those truths, those very objections were intended to invalidate.

What contrasts, too, are exhibited in the indication of feeling! Some are silent and pensive when in the highest state of mental enjoyment; and despair occasionally exhibits itself in its utmost extremity by loud bursts of laughter.

Sully describes the younger Servin as a miracle and a monster; a miracle of mind, a monster of passion. He was scarcely ignorant of any thing; a linguist, a poet, and a musician on almost every instrument; a philosopher in the knowledge of mathematics, yet a cheat, a drunkard, a debauchee; cowardly, treacherous, and cruel. He died with a multitude of oaths, denying a God. Alas! who would prefer the wit even of a Voltaire to that delicacy of sentiment and that strength of thought, which distinguished Corneille? Who would not forego the diseased sensibility of Rousseau to enjoy the comparatively philosophic indifference and virtuous

self-control of a Fenelon? and who would not prefer poverty, with conscious genius, to being chained to the tables of those who appreciate only to be amused, and celebrate only to throw lustre over their own deficiencies?

‘The surest road to recompense

Thus sings Salvator Rosa\*;

Is to conceal superior sense.  
 Better, far better, meet our doom,  
 And sleep within the peaceful tomb,  
 Than curs'd with wit, sense, worth, and spirit,  
 To trust to industry and merit;  
 And live a beggar and a slave,  
 The scorn of every fool and knave.’

The keen Neapolitan is at once indolent and vivacious; deep, yet loquacious; and temperate in the midst of sensuality and voluptuousness. These contrasts seem to be a little out of nature; yet they are said to exist; and it is certain that they do not afford greater than are, occasionally, exhibited in the bosom of poetry, science, and philosophy. Wieland is justly said to have had a happy talent, in mixing truth with the marvellous, the romantic with the serious, and corporeal images with spiritual ones. Our Chaucer is sometimes pathetic, sometimes satirical; now sublime, and now humorous; now religious, and now a little inclining to looseness. His characters are diversified; and many of his descriptions highly picturesque. Waller, though far from being immaculate in his practice, frequently declared, that he would erase any line from his poems, that did not imply some motive to virtue. Gay was licentious in his writings, and yet continued, we are

\* *Cantata*; Morgan.

told, to the last day of his life, uncontaminated by the world. The same may be said of Fontaine. Cowper exhibited a strong contrast in another way. He was one of the most gloomy of bigots, and yet a striking delineator of the ludicrous; and his countenance had little indicative power to express the native energies of thought. He was considerate to men's actions, but sarcastic and severe to their sentiments and opinions.

That men exhibit curious contrasts was, perhaps, one reason why Lord Monboddo imagined that in man were four distinct minds; the elemental, the vegetable, the animal, and the intellectual. This would seem to have been exemplified by Catullus; for in him we find elegant sentiments, delicate emotions, pathetic impressions, and sublime imagery; with some allusions and descriptions not only licentious, but repugnant and disgusting to the last degree.

In fact, some unite qualities and accomplishments so contrary, that they more resemble Dryads and Gorgons than women, Harpies and Cyclops than men. Others are not quite so curious in their contrasts, and yet remarkable. Lavater, for instance, says of himself, that his timidity was excessive, yet that he was intrepid; that he was susceptible of being led like a child, yet capable of standing unshaken against the efforts of a thousand men.

Aristophanes is pure in respect to style; but his wit is coarse, and the manners he exhibits filthy and gross. Juvenal, though so vehement, is, nevertheless, not without humour. Ariosto exhibits a fruitful imagination, original thoughts, and a striking variety of character and



description; yet he is often tedious, and his thoughts and humour occasionally relapse into the indelicate and indecent.


Racine also exhibited striking contrasts. For instance, his politeness of manner is designated as having been in reality little better than a mask to disguise the gall and spleen of his character; yet his dramas are distinguished by tenderness, elegance, and refined sentiment. Voltaire was great and little in all things; elevated and mean in his writings; noble and debased in his motives and actions; an eagle in some respects, a magpie in others.

‘Philosopher, rhetorician, sophist, and buffoon.’

Yet with all this, he was the most moral of all the tragic poets. And here we may remark, that the three French tragic masterpieces turn upon religious subjects; viz., Corneille’s ‘Polyeucte,’ Racine’s ‘Athalie,’ and Voltaire’s ‘Zayre.’

From the great to the comparatively little. Churchill published satires and sermons. In the former he proved himself as virulent, as irascible, and as vindictive as a wasp first injured; in the latter, a plain, mild, sensible, and peaceful Christian. We should, therefore, have paused in judging of him, did not experience step in to prove that these plain, mild, sensible, and peaceful sermons were introduced by a preface, which could be considered in no other light than as a satire,—perhaps not entirely unmerited,—on Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester.

Some persons are mild and ardent, yet ductile; reminding us, occasionally, of the Blue-bird of the Alps,



which chooses the most craggy rocks and frightful precipices for its resistance; and yet, when caught, becomes so docile and diligent, that it will whistle at the slightest word of command. Contra. William Rufus would be one moment, with eyes rolling with rage, and issuing orders of cruelty; at another, diverting his associates with his wit; not so much directed against them as himself. The contrasts of Rufus were occasional; those of Henry II. habitual. He was so restless, that he seldom or ever sat down; when not on horseback he stood; and yet a love of peace was an ornament that has rendered his memory grateful to every succeeding generation.

Mary, Queen of Scotland, was polite, gentle, and affable in her demeanour, yet an adulteress and the assistant murderer of her own husband\*. Mary, Queen of England, was an idolizer of her husband (Philip), and yet religiously cruel even to ferocity. In private life, Charles II. was frugal to economy and meanness; in public affairs, thoughtless, negligent, and profuse. He cared not one single grain of dust where the money came from, as long as it came to him. In one respect he resembled his father; for, if viewed on one side (as some one has remarked of Henry IV.), he was worthy the highest applause; if on the other, the most decided indignation.

We are charmed with a poem or an air in music; we are fascinated with the language, looks, and manners of youth, uniting grace with elegance and strength. We are captivated with the pure and innocent delight

\* The nonsense, that has been written in favour of this unfortunate woman, is a disgrace to literature and society at large. If Holyrood still exist, the Queen of it was guilty. The argument is an insult to the spirit of history, as well as to the spirit of truth.

derivable from the sentiments, tones, and pure affections of children. How often do these delights change when the poem has become obsolete ; when the air has been often repeated ; when the youth has grown into manhood, and the virgin attained the equivocal age of thirty-five !

Nature gives the outline and the intellect to fill it up ; and as education and opportunities are chiefly instrumental in filling that outline, it follows, as a matter of necessity, that as education and opportunities are different in all men, one will resemble, as it were, the towers and proportions of Rome and Palmyra, and others the sheds, huts, and cottages, that have been reared beside them. Man, too, occasionally presents a similar contrast in himself ; being humane and wise to-day, cruel and imbecile on the morrow ; and these not as discords are used in music, to relieve and render more agreeable the sweet effects of concord, but as natural results of different times, circumstances, and opportunities, passions, affections, and emotions. Indeed, one single contrast implies many meanings ; as nouns of multitude in Hebrew imply a plural sense without a plural termination.

Instances of judgment and extravagance, uniting in the same person, are not so rare as we might be ready to suppose. But judgment, blended with an extravagance so great as in the example of Pierre Vidal, is very remarkable. ‘ Pierre Vidal,’ says Sismondi, ‘ fell in love with a lady of Carcassonne, called Louve de Penautier, and in honour of her, he assumed the surname of Loup. To give himself a better title to the appellation, he clothed himself in a wolf’s skin, and

‘persuaded the shepherds to chase him with dogs over the mountains. He had the perseverance to suffer this strange pursuit to the last extremity, and was carried half dead to his mistress, who was not much moved by so singular a piece of devotion.’

All this was very absurd; and had the subject been only that of absurdity, we might have felt reluctant to quote it. But his biographers all agree in attesting, that Pierre Vidal’s folly extended no farther than to his vanity and attachments. On all other subjects he never failed to exhibit a sound and healthy judgment. It would seem, then, that Vidal must be associated with those who are insane only on one or two particular subjects. Independent of this, I have known many persons,—women as well as men,—who are so exceedingly clever in conversation and advice, and yet so passingly foolish in practice and action, that all that their acquaintances and friends can do is nothing but to marvel.

## CXXXVIII.

## WHO COMMIT EVIL FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOOD.

IRETON is said to have countenanced the assumption of a tyranny by Cromwell, in the hope of establishing a republic on his ruin; and Fairfax is supposed to have permitted himself, in the rectitude of his intentions, to be carried not only into many dubious enterprises, but into some criminal ones.

Hixem, a Spanish-Moorish king, boasted\*, that though, in the time of peace, he dipped his hand in the ‘ocean of benevolence,’ yet in war he bathed his right

\* Conde; Hist. de la Dom. des Arabes.

arm in 'a sea of blood.' Charles de Blois was gentle and courteous to his friends, and even to his adversaries; yet, in the midst of thanksgivings at the taking of Quimper, he gave orders for a general massacre of all the inhabitants\*. His zeal for religion and his cold-blooded ferocity harmonized but too well with his practice of cheating his soldiers, to indulge in spiritual liberalities. He sold himself, like Judas, as it were, to pay a debt he owed to Paul; and yet historians have vindicated his conduct, on the ground that his crimes and his virtues were epitomes of the humours prevalent in the age in which he was so unfortunate as to live. This is poverty of argument indeed! The precepts of the Testament have always been the same.

The murderer of Henry III. of France was excited to that horrid deed by a hope given him by the fathers, and it is said by Madame de Montpensier, that if he succeeded, he should be a cardinal, and if not, that he should be canonized†. It is also, I believe, thought by many, that Damian, in wounding Louis XV., spoke truth in his confession, that he only meant to wound, not to assassinate; and that, in wounding him, his motive was the hope the king might have an opportunity in the leisure, which his wound would give him, of seeing the wisdom of restoring the tranquillity of his dominions by re-establishing the parliament of Paris.

There, literally, is no limit to the ingenious sophistications of men!

\* Daru; Hist. de Bretagne.

† 'Affermando-gli che vivendo serebbe stato fatto cardinale, e morendo per aver liberata la città, e ucciso il persecutore della sede, serebbe senza dubbio stato canonizzato per santo.'—*Davila*.

## CXXXIX.

## WHO DO GOOD ACTIONS WITH VILE MOTIVES.

EDWARD I. assisted the march of liberty; that is, he encouraged the march of the people in their path to power; but he did so because he thought it would operate as a check on the arrogance of the nobles and the bigotry of the clergy. Elizabeth made herself feared by the nobility, but beloved by the people. Wherefore?—That she might make herself absolute. Thomas, first Earl of Dorset, bought land at a price more than it was worth. Why did he do this?—In the assurance that he would ‘prosper the better for it.’ In fact, a vast number of what have been called good actions have originated out of the vilest or the meanest of motives. There is no necessity to conceal this truth. To do so would be to act the part of an obstinate, ignorant, feeble, old man.

Is there an ardent Catholic who will not celebrate, —even *ad cælum*, —Charlemagne’s magnificence to the Roman Church? He will scarcely allow the suspicion, that it arose out of the desire of restraining the power of the Dukes of Spoleto, Capua, and Benevento; nor will he believe that he was actuated by the hope, that the clergy, by the natural influence they enjoy over the minds of ignorant men, would keep his vassals in the greater state of subjection\*.

In the eighth century multitudes left their possessions to the Church. Wherefore?—To bribe heaven from

\* Carolus Magnus, pro contundenda gentium, &c. William Malms. *De Rebus Gestis Rerum Angliæ.*

too close and rigid an investigation into their vices and crimes. In fact, the influence, power, and wealth of the clergy were immeasurably increased by the doctrine, widely and most industriously circulated, from the church, the chapter, and the bench, that punishments for the wicked, in a future state, might be commuted for donations to God, the saints, the bishops, and the monks.

The church, too, gained no small degree of wealth and influence in lands by the contract called *Precaria*; for, by this contract\*, whoever gave lands to the church were entitled not only to the profits of them during life, but to twice the amount; and in case they would give usufruct also, they received three times the value of other estates belonging to the church in exchange. And this regulation seems to be as old as the time of St. Augustine †.

#### CXL.

##### BAD MEN WHO HAVE DONE GOOD ACTIONS.

MENTOR's advice to Idomeneus was exceedingly eloquent. 'It is time,' said he, 'that you should learn, that a man may perform good acts, and be still wicked; that men of the worst principles and dispositions do good, when it serves their purpose, with the same facility as evil.' May not this act as a commentary on the characters of Henry VIII. and Cardinal Mazarin?

\* Council of Meaux, canon xxii., A.D. 845.

† Paul Sarpi, Eccl. Ben., ch. xix.

Henry VIII., after the battle of Flodden, could have reduced Scotland entirely to subjection ; but he refused to do so out of regard to his sister, Queen Margaret, who was appointed regent after the death of her husband (James IV.), slain in the battle. Henry was, in fact, an example to prove, that a man may have many of the worst vices of which our nature is susceptible, and yet possess one at least of those virtues which most dignify our nature.

Amongst those bad men who have had some fine qualities, may be ranked Cardinal Mazarin. Envy, ingratitude, deception, ignorance of legislation, obliquity, hypocrisy, insatiable avarice ; these are some of the qualities by which he was dishonoured. ‘Alike insensible to injuries and to favours,’ says Deformaux, ‘he knew not how to punish or to reward. Hence favours, the best deserved, were only forced from him by threats, or by working on his fears.’ Yet had this very cardinal many virtues, arising from grace of action and sweetness of temper.

Even Louis XI. did many good things :—‘He lowered the power of the great vassals,’ says a celebrated French historian, ‘raised that of the majesty, and made the nobles subject to the laws.’ Charles IX., too, is said to have had many great virtues ; and the assertion is made even by De Thou\*.

For my own part, I have seen men of bad character do what no one could have expected of them ; and men of good fortune and fair reputation act such meanesses, as none but actual witnesses could credit !

\* ‘Principes præclara indole, et magnis virtutibus ; nisi quatenus eas prava educatione, et matris indulgentia corruptit.’



## CXLI.

WHO HAVE INNOCENTLY COMMITTED BAD ACTIONS.

WHAT a paradox am I about to assert! *Many atrocious actions have been honestly committed.* Yet on this ground, and this only, can the entire history of religious persecution be, in the slightest degree, justified. Fanaticism is more cruel than ignorance; and more lofty in moral pretence, but more detestable in practice, than even military tyranny itself; since it renders the human mind capable of any thing; nor is it confined to one religion. It embraces all.

‘Sepius olim

Religio peperit scelerosa, atque impia facta.’

Sir Everard Digby, who was executed in the twenty-fourth year of his age, for misprision of treason in regard to the Powder Plot, was governed by this delusive species of virtue. He was the handsomest man of his time, and accounted the finest gentleman in England; and being asked at his trial, how he could hazard his life and estate in such an infamous transaction, he answered, ‘If I thought there had been the smallest sin in it, I would not have engaged in it for all the world!’

My position is still better exemplified by another instance of innocent atrocity. It is cited by Montesquieu from Father Bougerel, of a Jew, who, having been accused of blaspheming the Virgin, was, in consequence, condemned to be flayed alive. On the day of execution, several gentlemen of Provence rushed upon the scaffold in masks, drove away the executioner, and

commenced the dreadful operation, under an impression, that they were avenging the cause of the Blessed Virgin. Thank Heaven, such times are past; never, let us hope, to return! The printing press will save the world. Let us place the inventor of it, then, at the head of mankind, after Memnon, the inventor of letters.

## CXLII.

## WHO FORM CLASSES OF THEMSELVES.

SOME men,—like the camel, the camleopard, the bear, the badger, the ant-eater, and the sloth, in the kingdom of quadrupeds,—form classes of themselves. They are unlike all others. Don Diego de Mendoza was an instance, and a very remarkable one; for he was a successful warrior, a man of gallantry and intrigue, an historian, a translator of and commentator on Aristotle, the possessor of a large library, a lover of Greek MSS., a courtier, a negotiator, an ambassador, a cruel administrator, a base minister, the author of ‘Lazarillo de Tormes,’ a poet, and a villain of the first and darkest order. He stands, in the midst of mankind, solitary.

It is very certain,—and Longinus makes an analogous remark in respect to the Greek language,—that common expressions have frequently more strength and meaning than laboured ones. It is true, also, with men; but curiosities are still worthy of observation; and few men of his order deserved more to be gazed at, as such, than Paracelsus and Edward Wortley Montague.

Paracelsus was one of the most remarkable exemplars of knowledge and nonsense, wisdom and folly, science and ignorance, credulity and incredulity, honesty and dishonesty, religion and atheism, with which biography has made us acquainted. I say this, however, without any obstinacy, or attempt at accuracy. For his friends have been so lavish in his praise, and his enemies so unmeasured in their censures, that to acquire a true knowledge of his tenets, philosophy, morals, discoveries, and irregularities, would require more time than the subject is worth, and a skill that were better appropriated to other purposes. We may safely assert, however, that he was a quack of the first order, though his quackery did not command the greatest success.

Edward Wortley Montague, also, was a personage exceedingly difficult to estimate. Son of a man of fortune, he became a chimney-sweeper; a fister-boy in the streets; a cabin-boy in a vessel; a muleteer in Spain; a labourer in Switzerland and Holland; a horse-jockey in Germany; and in England a member of the House of Commons. He lived afterwards in Italy, wrote *Reflections on the Rise and Fall of ancient Republics*, and turned Catholic. After this he embraced the Mahometan faith, and kept a harem.

We may, I think, safely assert, that these three persons formed classes, not only different from each other, but equally different from all the rest of the world.

## CXLIII.

WHO HAVE COMMITTED BAD ACTIONS WITH NOBLE  
VIEWS.

ANATOMISTS are compelled, in some degree, to practices partaking of cruelty. Even the humane Haller \* was led to cruel experiments, in order to acquire a more precise knowledge in regard to the relative sensibility of animal parts. Some ancient anatomists dissected living men; viz. the bodies of criminals. We may instance Herophilus, and Erasistratus the grandson of Aristotle. This was an act of barbarity to insure beneficial results. It was allowed by the laws; and when laws speak, most men seem to think that humanity has an obligation to be silent; and that eloquence is an ignominy and a crime. Who, however, can be ignorant that legislators are, sometimes, far more atrocious, in the laws they enact, than the men they condemn?

It appears certain that some men have been actuated to bad deeds by noble aspirations; and of this Paul Jovius † furnishes an example in Olgiati. This enthusiast was instigated to be a party in the murder of Galeizzo Sforza, Duke of Milan, by a schoolmaster, who was continually celebrating the virtue of Brutus in assassinating Cæsar. Brought to the place of execution, Olgiati addressed himself in the following manner. ‘Collect thyself, Olgiati. The memory of thy deed

\* Vide Deux Mémoires sur les Parties sensibles et irritables.

† See also Machiv. Ist. Fior. vii.

‘ will never perish. Death is bitter ; but the pain of it  
 ‘ will be short, while the glory will be eternal \*.’

Olgiate seems to have thought with Jason, the Thes-  
 salian †, that to effect a great good, it is sometimes justi-  
 fiable to perpetrate a great act of atrocity. In the same  
 spirit Clement and Ravillac believed themselves to be ac-  
 tuated by the sublimest impulse of devotion. It is very  
 certain, that the characters of men must always be  
 judged in reference to the times in which they thought,  
 planned, and executed ; failed, succeeded, or left half  
 done for others to complete.

CXLIV.

WHO ARE CRUEL IN GENERAL, YET CLEMENT IN PARTI-  
 CULAR.

THE Greeks were an elegant people. Even their  
 trophies, the monuments of war, were not permitted to  
 be permanent. They were neither of iron, of brass, nor  
 of marble : but of baked clay. They were a good-  
 natured people, also : yet not so delicate of blood, as, of  
 a good-natured people, we might have had reason to  
 expect. The Athenians, for instance, as at Melos and  
 Scione (we have the testimony of their own country-  
 man †), murdered all the males of a defenceless people,  
 over the age of fourteen ; and sold the women and chil-  
 dren to perpetual slavery !

Though the Areopagites forbade § any one to raise  
 the passions in a cause, though ever in so gentle a  
 manner, the Athenians had two goddesses, whom the

\* *Mors acerbia, fama perpetua, stabit memoria facti.*

† *Arist. Rhet.*

‡ *Thucydides, v.*

§ *Arist. Rhet. i. c. i. p. 4.*

Romans adopted late\*. These were clemency and pity. There is some doubt, however, whether the latter was ever adopted in Rome: for in respect to pity, Quintilian, when he recommended it to a judge, was curiously cautious lest the recommendation might offend†.

Cruelty has never, in any age, been visited by adequate indignation. Agamemnon, Scipio Nasica, and Titus, have been celebrated for their humanity: yet Agamemnon insists to Menelaus, that when Ilion falls, none shall be saved: not even the suckling on the mother's breast. Scipio Nasica ought to have been given up to the vengeance of the Spaniards, for having inflicted such cruelties on the Numantines; since not only Paterculus and Florus confess, that Numantium had given Rome no just cause of complaint; but Appian expressly asserts, that Nasica exceeded the orders he had received from the senate. As to Titus, it is dangerous to speak of him; a fortunate speech and a few months' virtue being permitted to retrieve some crimes of which Suetonius accuses him ‡, and others which Josephus not only tolerates §, but almost approves.

## CXLV.

WHO DELUDE THEMSELVES INTO A BELIEF, THAT THEY  
HAVE DONE NO BAD ACTIONS.

SENECA says, there is a pleasure in wickedness as well as in virtue; and it must be so, or the world

\* 'Urbe fuit mediâ,' &c.—*Statius*. Theb. xii. 492.

† 'Si misericordiam commendabo judici, nihil proderit, quod prudentissima civitas Atheniensium non eam pro affectu, sed pro numine, accepit?'—*Inst. Orat.* v. c. 12.

‡ In Vit. Tit. c. vi.

§ Lib. vii. c. 3.

would never have seen what it has seen in every age and country. To justify vile deeds is one of the last infirmities of man : yet to commit a bold, bad deed, and then affect a power of doing good by that wrong, is the constant practice and apology of adventurous men.

Charles X. has recently seen the error of his ways, and, what is more, acknowledged them. ‘ The conduct ‘ of the Duchess de Berri,’ said he \* to Chateaubriand, ‘ has been very improper ; it is an unfortunate affair ‘ both for herself and for me ; but I, who have not forgotten my youth, should be the last to be severe with ‘ the weakness of a poor woman. When one has been ‘ guilty of as many errors as I have, he should make allowances for other people. I will not receive her here ‘ without her husband ; but she may come if accompanied by him, and the wrongs which she has done her ‘ children and ourselves shall be forgotten.’ Upon this, Chateaubriand expressed gratitude for the indulgence ; on which the king answered :—‘ Let it not ‘ surprise you. I have forgotten all ; I have no longer ‘ any feeling against any one. I am now an unhappy ‘ old man, who has finished his part in the drama of ‘ this world. I have no feeling even against Philippe. ‘ He now knows, that the throne is not worth the ‘ trouble and anxiety, which must be its accompaniments ; and it is more than probable that those, who ‘ made him king, have taken their own means of avenging me.’

The luxurious and profligate Louis XV. constantly

\* Prague, June 22, 1833.

attended public worship ; and is said to have been so assiduous in private acts of devotion, that he really believed himself to be a very good Christian. Conscience,—that internal monitor, which sits in judgment on all our actions,—awoke him, however, at last.

Self-deception is the most alluring of all species of cunning. Rousseau was a remarkable instance. He had even the presumption to address the Deity in his last illness, in a style, implying, that he was about to deliver his soul to Him, as pure as when he received it at his hands ! It is certain that Rousseau was the mirror of vanity ; but it could not be otherwise than amusing to hear the French priests and the French emigrants attribute their ruin to the writings of Rousseau and Voltaire, rather than to their own vanity and bigotry, cowardice, ignorance, and presumption.

Indeed, it is astonishing what power men, guilty of follies and crimes, have to delude themselves ! Napoleon, after his conduct in Spain, his innumerable legal murders in the field, and the consequent agony his policy entailed upon surviving wives, parents, and children,—Napoleon, having an inclination to commit suicide, on learning that St. Helena was his destined theatre of reflection, could argue in its defence, after the following manner :  
' My friend ! I have sometimes an idea of quitting  
' you ; and this would not be very difficult ; it is only  
' necessary to create a little mental excitement, and I  
' shall soon have escaped. All will be over, and you  
' can then tranquilly rejoin your families. This is the  
' more easy, since my principles do not oppose any bar  
' to it. I am one of those who conceive, that the pains



‘ of the other world were only imagined, as a counter-  
‘ poise to those inadequate allurements which are offered  
‘ us here. God can never have willed such a contra-  
‘ diction to his infinite goodness, especially for an act  
‘ of this kind ; and what is it, after all, but wishing to  
‘ return to him a little sooner ?’

What curious language is this from one, who had waged so many sanguinary, unprincipled, and useless wars ! One who, unmindful of posterity, had chosen to be an Alexander, when he might have been an Epaminondas ; a Cæsar, when he might have been a Washington. ‘ What reward have I not to expect ?’ said he, one day ; ‘ I who have run a career so extraordinary, ‘ so tempestuous, without committing a single crime ; ‘ and yet how many might I not have been guilty of ! I ‘ can await his judgment without fear ; he will not find ‘ this conscience stained with the thoughts of murder ‘ and poisonings ; with the infliction of violent and ‘ premeditated deaths ; events so common in the his- ‘ tory of those whose lives have resembled mine. I ‘ have wished only for the glory, the power, the great- ‘ ness of France. All my faculties, all my efforts, all ‘ my moments, were directed to the attainment of that ‘ object. These cannot be crimes. To me they ap- ‘ peared acts of virtue. What then would be my hap- ‘ piness, if the bright prospect of futurity presented itself ‘ to crown the last moments of my existence !’

At another time he said to O’Meara, ‘ I never com- ‘ mitted a crime in all my political career ! At my last ‘ hour I can assert that. Had I done so, I should not ‘ have been here now. I should have dispatched the

‘Bourbons. It only rested with me to give my consent, and they would have ceased to live. “J’ai toujours marché avec l’opinion de grandes masses et les événemens.” “J’ai toujours marché avec l’opinion de cinq ou six millions d’hommes.”’

This naturally reminds us of an assertion of Dumourier: ‘In the course of a motley and very active life, I cannot discover a single incident for which I have occasion to blush.’

Napoleon and Dumourier seem, like many other persons, to have supposed that they had a right to do whatever they possessed the power to do: a delusion, arising in no small degree from the misfortune of having had too high an opinion of their own talents, and too low an opinion in regard to the wants and rights of mankind.

## CXLVI.

## SIMPLICITY OF CHARACTER.

THIS beautiful characteristic (simplicity) distinguishes most men of enlarged minds and true science. Fontenelle cited it as one of the qualities for which Varignon was remarkable. ‘But,’ said he, ‘I have bestowed the same praise so often on other members of the Academy, that it may be doubted whether it is not less due to the individuals than to the sciences which they cultivated in common.’ A finer compliment to the sciences can scarcely be cited than this!

‘As when seraphic hands a hymn impart;  
Wild-warbling Nature all, above the reach of art.’

## CXLVII.

## WHO ARE COMBINATIONS OF SOLECISMS.

WHAT a compound was Cato the censor! He was, in fact, a combination of solecisms. Frugal and temperate, he was, nevertheless, fond of military glory. He took Fabius Maximus for his model, and yet practised usury in the most open manner. Inexorable in respect to public justice, and esteeming it a high political duty to prosecute offenders, he yet preferred the character of a good husband to that of a good senator. In his youth he hated Greece; in his manhood he persecuted the science of Greece; yet in his age he learned the language of Greece. He was the vainest of men, and scrupled not to commend himself in the most public places, and in the most unblushing manner. He impeached Scipio; but Scipio treating him with disdain, he deemed it expedient to drop his accusations. He lent money to his slaves, who employed it in buying boys, and instructing them for his service; and he then sold them at the end of every year. And so great a lover was he of what is called prudence, that he esteemed him the most godlike and full of glory who, at his death, was found to have doubled what he had received from his ancestors! He hated the memory of Socrates; and married a young wife in his old age! And yet this is the man whose memory is even now associated with public and private virtue, and of whom Paterculus could write, '*Homo virtuti simillimus, et per omnia ingenio diis quàm hominibus propior*\*.' It is almost laughable to read such judgments; particu-

\* Lib. ii., c. 36.

larly from Paterculus ; he who was not only the panegyrist of Tiberius, but of his odious minister, Sejanus.

## CXLVIII.

## WHO SUSPEND THEIR NATURAL CHARACTERS.


SOME men do this for years ; their bad qualities as well as their good ones. In the midst of most good actions, however, less noble qualities will peep out ; and in the midst of bad ones, good qualities will flash and illumine, as it were, at least for a time, the hemisphere of the heart. Hence one of the thousand causes, why in men appear so many points of inconsistency : wise, for instance, to-day, and foolish to-morrow ; now all peace, now all passion ; generous on this occasion, heartless on that.

I am often reminded of that species of texture, called shot-silk. This material is finely woven ; and yet its colours seem ever to be changing as the wearer moves. The conduct of men seems, occasionally, to vary after a similar manner ; but, on examination, they are found to change only as the silk does ; the contextity of their natures still remaining the same.

## CXLIX.

WHOSE NATURE FROM ILL-USAGE APPEARS TO BE  
CHANGED.

MEN are certainly often turned into villains from having smarted intensely from the villany of others ; but some even of these turn naturally to a better course upon the approach of a better fortune ; and this reminds me of a picture by a late eminent poet :—



‘ He was a man of a strange temperament,  
 Of mild demeanour, though of savage mood ;  
 Moderate in all his habits, and content  
 With temperance in pleasure, as in food ;  
 Quick to perceive, and strong to bear, and meant  
 For something better, if not wholly good.  
 His country’s wrongs, and his despair to save her,  
*Had stung him from a slave to an enslaver.*’

Danger of situation, misfortune, and ill-usage, alter the direction of many, and sometimes almost change their very natures, from the top of the head, as it were, to the tip of the toe. A striking example of this is given in one of the dramas of Beaumont and Fletcher, where the mild, sweet, and gentle Evadne is turned by seduction and abandonment into ‘ any thing, that knew not pity.’

## CL.

## WHO ARE DIFFERENT AT DIFFERENT TIMES.

ARISTOTLE attributes the wide variety of manners and modes of life and character in men and animals, to the want of subsistence, and the various means employed for supplying it. This is partly true and partly otherwise. The world is a mere puppet-show ; and men such compounds, that even their histories are but unequal commentaries on their characters. For though their talents sometimes rise, as if they were sown and nurtured in hot-beds, their characters are often not thoroughly expanded till the awful day,—

‘ When tired Dissimulation drops her mask.’

Man is complex, whether we regard his organical structure, his moral qualities, or his mental capacities. Hence, through a long life, his exhibitions are but one continued series of contradiction. Who can be per-

fidious and just; cowardly and brave; mean and magnanimous, at the same moment? Yet instances are far from being unfrequent, in which men have been perfidious on one occasion; just on a second; cowardly on a third; humane on a fourth; cruel on a fifth; and magnanimous on a sixth. Whom shall we adduce? Augustus, Constantine, Rienzi, and Napoleon.

## CLI.

## WHO ARE DIFFERENT IN DIFFERENT PLACES.

THESE persons remind me of an animal (the name of which I do not choose to particularize, since it is found in every river, rivulet, ditch, and pond, throughout Europe, the northern parts of Asia, and, perhaps, America), which at first resembles a fish, then a lizard; and losing its tail, and acquiring lungs instead of gills, becomes a species of quadruped. So different is it at different seasons of existence!

Plants, too, this order of men frequently remind us of. A traveller visits the hot-houses of England and France; and beholds a small dwarf shrub scarcely worthy, as it were, his attention. He extends his excursion to Brazil, Mexico, and Peru; and there, to his astonishment, he recognizes the same despised species of shrub in a large, stately, and magnificent tree.

## CLII.

## DIFFERENCE OF MEN IN THEIR SPHERES, AND OUT OF THEM.

'I HAVE often amused myself,' says Dr. Warton\*, 'by thinking what sort of magistrates Dante and Mon-

\* On Pope's 1st Epist.


‘taigne made, when the former was mayor of Florence, and the latter of Bourdeaux. Did their manners change with their stations?’ Assuredly, there must always be a change in such conditions; because not only policy, but a due regard to business, demands as much.

A shoemaker looks at the shoes of the person with whom he is conversing; a tailor at the coat, waistcoat, and small-clothes; a furrier at the muff and tippet; the dress-maker at the flounce, furbelow, and pelisse. Go into a shop to purchase or discharge a bill; the master or the mistress of it seems ready to kiss your feet. But let it be to sell any thing; to request payment; or only let the master or the mistress fancy we are to gain any thing by them,—the unholy, the disreputable difference!

See a merchant in his counting-house,—how respectable! take him from his sphere, and what is he? See a magistrate in the country, in his grounds, village, and even county town; and he really seems to be a person of no small air and consequence. Meet him in the capital, and he becomes as insignificant as the person who observes him.

See a colonel and a post-captain—what a difference! yet what a resemblance! Behold a country apothecary and a country attorney; what silent disdain has the first for the second!—what supercilious contempt has the second for the first!

Behold a doctor of divinity as a magistrate at the county sessions; and then accompany him to his rectory; where he dozes, after a hearty dinner of beef, pudding, and partridge. Does he appear the same person?



The early riser regards the late riser with no small share of disdain. With the same feeling the travelling tinker regards the stationary mender of shoes. The soldier smiles at the sailor; the sailor abuses the soldier, and calls him a 'live lobster.'

See a baronet in a hunting field; at a turnpike meeting; on the road with one or two grooms riding behind him; shooting on his own manor, or coursing on that of a friend. See the same person in the presence of another, who can carry fifty freeholders to a county election; or in the drawing-room of a neighbouring peer of the realm: what an immediately converted creature does he appear! He bends;—nay, he almost stoops.

See a nobleman riding in his coach; walking in his shrubberies; lounging on his couch in his library, or sitting, in dignified ease, of an evening, in his drawing-room: what an imposing aspect does he assume! Behold the same honourable, right honourable, or right reverend personages, in the cabinet of a minister, or at a levee or drawing-room at St. James's. Is it possible to recognize them?—perfectly so. One has an apron, another a blue riband, a third a red riband, a fourth a garter, and a fifth a star; but all—or most—equally obsequious to the deity of the place!

## CLIII.

## WHO ACT AGAINST THEIR OWN DISPOSITIONS.

CIRCUMSTANCES often make men act, for the greater part of their lives, against their natural characters;




some better, others worse, than their inclinations prompt. How melancholy, for instance, is it to see persons, with capacities worthy of statesmen, wasting their intellectual energies in penning mortgages, in dispensing medicines, or in waving a sword at another man's caprice!

One thing strikes me strongly; viz., that a good man will not assist a good one so cheerfully, or so effectually, as one bad man will help another of his own stamp. This, however, may not be said in reproach; though it may be regretted that goodness should have so unlimited a prudence. The bad help their fellows upon the principle, that one good turn deserves another; and they feel conscious, that they know not how soon they may have to call on their associates for generosity, or upon their friends for gratitude. Let the reason, however, be what it may, it cannot be denied, that a thief will run into every species of danger to extricate a thief; while good men sit still amid the misfortunes of their friends and—sympathize. Thus bad men act well, and good ones act ill, against their natural dispositions.

#### CLIV.

##### WHO ACT CONTRARY TO THEIR REAL CHARACTERS.

SOME act in a manner so opposite to their characters, that it is almost passing belief. James I., for instance, performed an action more in harmony with the chivalrous character of Henry IV. of France than his own. Impossible! yet so;—for the fleet, in which Anne of Denmark embarked for Scotland, having been dispersed by a violent tempest, and the princess having been compelled



to put into a small port in Norway, James, upon learning the news, fitted out a small fleet unknown to his council, and, attended by his chancellor, several nobles, and three hundred other persons, went in search of his bride. After some danger, he arrived in a harbour near Upslo, where the bride then was; and in a few days the marriage was solemnized.

The zebra is the wildest and one of the most intractable of animals. Who, then, would suppose that it lives in its native recesses in herds? In captivity, it never assumes a character; not even after the culture of many years.

## CLV.

## ON HUMAN INCONSISTENCIES.

‘A hoary head, with sense combined,  
Claims veneration from mankind;  
But if with folly join’d, it bears  
The badge of ignominious years.’—*Philo. B.*

IN Rubens’s picture of ‘Meleager and Atalanta,’ the figures have weapons in their *left* hands. ‘What an ‘error!’ exclaims the connoisseur. ‘Stop,’ says the artist; ‘the design is for tapestry.’

It is said of Salvator Rosa\*, that every thing in his pictures was of a piece: his rocks, trees, mountains, and skies, having the same wild character that animated his figures. Well had it been for Lord Strafford had he exhibited the same consistency. For, had he adhered to the advice he gave to Charles I.; viz.† to let his

\* Duppa, 169.

† Rushworth, 1355.

ministers serve him according to the laws and statutes of the realm ; had he done this, he had not perished on a scaffold. He had been, in fact, one of the noblest men of his age.


Pagano\* insists, that, let the actions of men be what they may, they are subjected to rules as general, and as constant, as the phenomena of the natural world. It is, nevertheless, certain, that the greatness of some arises out of the circumstance that they are compelled to wrestle in collision between their virtues and vices. Thus positive and negative bodies will reciprocally attract each other ; but if the intensity be equal, each will remain unelectrified by contact.

Some one,—I forget whom,—has said, that men have either no characters at all, or that they consist in being inconsistent with themselves. Onslow the Speaker, however, remarked †, in the character of Sir William Wyndham, that every thing about him seemed great ; all the parts of his character being suited, and a help, as it were, to each other. Not the slightest inconsistency was to be observed. All was in harmony, not only in appearance, but in truth. Such, however, can be no other than the language of romance. For men are so inconsistent with themselves, that man may well be called a little republic ; often changing its magistrates.

Mirabeau proposed the enactment of a curious law in the National Assembly ; viz., that every one should be excluded from the national and provincial assemblies, and even from the magistracy, who, by the mismanage-

\* Di Saggi Politici.

† Remarks on various parts of Sir R. Walpole's conduct.



ment of their private concerns, indicated themselves incapable of prudently conducting the business of the public. On this principle, some of the most eminent of modern, as well as of ancient, statesmen would have been excluded from participating in the discussion of public business ; amongst whom may be instanced Walsingham, Bacon, Pitt, Fox, and Sheridan. Mirabeau himself would even have excluded himself ; for no one can be said to manage his private affairs well who takes bribes, or participates in public plunder. The fact is, men of very enlarged views can seldom confine themselves to the measurement of a house, an estate, a parish, or a province. They lose by enlarging ; like circles in the water, and sounds in the air.

## CLVI.

## INCONSISTENCIES OF EMINENT MEN.

SOME persons are of such inconstancy, that they may apply to themselves the following translation from one of Horace's epistles :—

' My mind is with itself at strife,  
And disagrees in all the course of life ;  
What now it throws away, it now admires ;  
And what it hated once, it now desires ;  
Unsettled as the sea, or fleet as air,  
It rages, builds, and changes round to square.'

Diderot was one of these ; for he wrote things which, were we not assured to the contrary, we should insist were composed by two persons, not only differing in manners and morals, but even in age and country ; for, though he aspired to the glory of Plato, as Barrière

was accustomed to say, he did not blush to imitate Petronius.

Poets, too, are but too often as strangely inconsistent as their readers and admirers; yet, perhaps, not more so; though the allusions I shall make would appear to prove otherwise. Guarini, for instance, deserved the title of poet; yet, when he thought his 'Pastor Fido' was criticised, his anger knew no bounds, though only the most captious of 'the tuneful race' could have taken the criticism to himself. For when the critique on tragi-comedy was printed, the 'Pastor Fido' had not been published. Guarini lived at Ferrara, and the critic at Padua; and neither had personal knowledge of the other. What strange caprices take up their habitation in this 'vile anatomy!' When young, I was much taken with this poet's 'Pastor Fido.' I would now put it on the back of the fire for half a basket of violets; but I should be little disposed to act thus with the inimitable 'Aminta,' 'Comus,' or the 'Faithful Shepherdess.'

Shall we turn to other minstrels? Camoëns has blended the Christian and heathen mythology in a very curious way; while Sannazaro invokes Apollo and the Muses instead of the prophets; and even represents the Virgin as intent upon the verses of the Sibyl.

Painters, too, are sometimes curiously inconsistent. Nicholas Poussin, for instance, in his fine picture of 'Jochebed's placing the Cradle of Moses among the 'Bulrushes,' formed the background from views of Rome, instead of the city of Pharaoh. The spectator, therefore, stands upon the borders of the Tiber, when

when he ought to be pausing on those of the Nile. Rubens was still more careless in respect to costume and anachronisms. In one of the compartments of the Luxembourg Gallery, therefore, Mercury is introduced to Mary de Medici by a cardinal; and her train is supported, at a marriage sacrament, by Hymen, Christ standing on one side of the altar!

Men of genius are inconsistent, too, in other things. They love solitude, for instance, and yet have an ardent desire of fame and public applause. Some are head-strong rather than firm, and perpetually undoing what they have done; and thence are accused of duplicity; when the whole arises from mere want of resolution. This, indeed, is an error many men fall into; and of this even some writers\* accuse Pope Pius VI.

We speak and think differently, at different times, of the same things, and of the same persons; yet we speak and think with sincerity. We do not always see through the same pair of spectacles, as it were; and we have but too many reasons to change our opinions of persons, since they themselves change their opinions, manners, habits, principles, and conduct, according to the standard of their interests, passions, and caprices; being constant in nothing but a love of themselves.

‘The rogue and fool, by fits, is fair and wise;  
And even the best, by fits, what they despise.’

It cannot be denied, that where there is wisdom there is also a portion of folly. Alas! who can associate

\* Vide Hist. and Phil. Mem. Pius VI. and his Pontificate.

the author of *Utopia*\* and the dispenser of unbought justice on the woollack, with him who, in the language of Burnet, became 'a persecutor even unto blood?' Who does not reflect, too, with a melancholy, allied to shame, that the greatest geometrician, that France ever produced,† should have suffered himself to stoop so low as—for years!—to administer to the amours and intrigues of his own mistress‡? Is it credible?—scarcely credible; yet fatally true!

## CLVII.

## WHO ARE INCONSISTENT ONLY IN APPEARANCE.

'Can a demeanour so composed, so noble,  
And yet so tender, want true innocence?  
It cannot be.'—*Digby*; *Elvira*, act iii. sc. 1.

ONE eye is sometimes so different from another, that two different glasses are required to insure a perfect vision. Deeds are regarded not according to their merits, but their consequences: few taking the trouble to convince themselves, that deeds are consequences also; and flow from their causes, as naturally as clouds revolve in shapes according to the different force of the wind.

Historians and biographers are frequently in error from the circumstance of their not considering two important points. Biographers forget, that opinions as frequently proceed from actions, as actions do from opinions: and historians too often attribute consequences to the influence of particular persons, which are, in fact,

\* Sir Thomas More.

† D'Alembert.

‡ L'Espinasse.

the natural results of general manners, and the relative situation of one nation with another. Hence arise the many inconsistencies observable in most of the histories and biographies we read.

Many are inconsistent in appearance; and yet, could we know the motives by which they are actuated, and the lights in which only they are permitted to see things and persons, we should find those inconsistencies apparent rather than real. They rise the same, though changed; exemplifying the inscription on the tomb of Bernouilli,—‘*Eadem mutata resurgo.*’

Albani would seem, to many, to have been a man of loose morals, because he was a painter of nudities; yet he was not. His wife was his Venus; his sons his Cupids; his daughters his Graces. Malvasia gives a highly animated picture of his family circle; and his temper was so happy, that nothing could disturb it; while his regard for his wife, Doralice, appears to have been worthy of a woman who was at once his scholar, his steward, his companion, and friend. Some, however, would reverse this picture; declaring, that he and his wife were miserable.

Thomson having praised a person of rank, whom he found afterwards to be undeserving his praise, solemnly recanted the error. So, in recent times, ——— having dedicated a work to a prince of the royal house, though not of the royal blood; having reason to know that he had made a mountain of a mole-hill, struck his pen across the dedication; and there it still remains.

It is one thing to do, and another to undo what has already been done. Cicero dissuaded Pompey from



uniting with Cæsar; but Pompey having done so, he equally dissuaded the breaking with him. What inconsistency was there in that?

Two of the objects, which formed the ground-work of the grand alliance, were to prevent the union of France and Spain, and to guard the Spanish dominions in America from falling under the dominion of France. In our days\* Spain has been permitted to become, as it were, a province of France; a subject, dangerous as it may hereafter become, not so much to be dreaded, since the South American colonies have established their independence of their mother-country. But, had not that event been clearly foreseen, the British ministry would, assuredly, have deserved impeachment, for permitting Spain to become, in effect (though it is to be hoped only for a time), a mere province of that country, which has ever taken pleasure in clipping the wings of this.

We occasionally call those inconsistent, who argue against their rank, their profession, or their interest. But these are, frequently, so far from being inconsistent, that, if done, according to the balance, we might associate their conduct with true wisdom. ‘Since it ‘ appears to me,’ said one of the Dukes of Bedford†, ‘not ‘ more likely, that the king of England will be in danger ‘ from his subjects, than that the people of England will ‘ be in danger from their king, I think it convenient to ‘ hold the balance equally between them. As I would ‘ not give the people any exemption, which might en-

\* This was written at the time in which the Duke of Angoulême was marching into Spain.

† A. D. 1743.

‘ courage them to rebel, I would give the crown no such prerogatives as may encourage any future monarchs to oppression.’

Fox opposed the union of the two kingdoms of England and Ireland; but when the measure had been effected, he hesitated, and most wisely did he hesitate, when he had the probable opportunity, to repeal the law. For to undo is, sometimes, even more dangerous than it originally was to do. Lord Chatham despised a peace which, he insisted, was the consequence of England’s having been sold to France, through the medium of the court of Turin. But peace having been made, he declared in parliament, two or three years after, that he would do all he could to preserve its integrity. He afterwards opposed the American war; but having only desired that taxation should be accompanied with representation, he as vehemently opposed \* the recognition of American independence. Lord Shelborne, too, was averse to that war; and yet desired no separation of the provinces. He, nevertheless, signed the peace, dismembering the empire. His apology was short, but sufficiently explicit and ample. ‘ It was not I,’ said his Lordship, ‘ who voluntarily yielded up the independence of America; it was the evil star of Britain; it was the blunders of a former administration; it was the power of revolted subjects; and the mighty arms of the house of Bourbon.’

In respect to general warrants, Lord Chatham’s conduct seems to have been equivocal. When prac-

\* April 8, 1778: the day on which he was taken ill in the House of Lords.

tised by a hostile party, he condemned them ; yet he issued one for apprehending the Count de St. Germain ; and another for seizing several persons going to France. The attorney-general (afterwards Lord Camden) informed his lordship, that such proceedings would be illegal ; and, if persisted in, the actor must take the consequences on his own head. Lord Chatham persisted, nevertheless ; and justified his conduct on the plea of necessity. The plea of necessity, if real, is the best of pleas ; yet no rigour beyond the law should ever be covered by a bill of indemnity. Every violation should be carried to a trial, and the violator punished or honoured as the circumstance may warrant.

Many appear to be inconsistent, because they turn with occasions ; but they turn only, as the ship tacks, to gain advantage by following the direction of the winds. We may approve to-day, though we disapproved yesterday ; that is, provided the subject comes before us in a clearer, truer, or a more virtuously advantageous shape.

Some will insist, that a love of what is called consistency is calculated to cripple the judgment by enfeebling the understanding ; and it is very certain, that consistency in error is one of the greatest blots in the policy of a statesman. It is, nevertheless, equally certain, that most men lose part, if not a great part, of their intellectual consequence in the eyes of others, when they alter their opinions, after the age of forty ; when no new circumstances have arisen to command the aid of a greater exercise of moral or political sagacity. And here we may remember, and with advantage, too, that

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we have a right to change our opinions of men oftener than of things. For things are, comparatively, stationary; whereas men are ever fluctuating. Circumstances change them; and their change changes not us, but the opinions we have of them. The knowing when to remain fixed, and when to change, marks the great difference between a wise man and a blockhead. The Portuguese proverb is known to every one:—‘The wise man changes his opinion often; the fool never.’

If we are voyaging from London to Peru, we must sometimes permit our ship to run five hundred leagues, as it were, out of her calculated way, rather than lose the benefit of the winds. For it is not the length of the voyage only we have to consult; but the safety of the vessel, and the preservation of the cargo and crew.

## CLVIII.

## WHO RESEMBLE EMINENT MEN IN PART.

WE sometimes meet characters who resemble eminent men in part, and in part only. I last night supped with one who had this propensity in common with Warburton: ‘Warburton,’ says Leland, ‘had an eager propensity to start aside from the regular and common orbit of opinion, upon every plain, every abstruse, every trifling, and every important subject.’ Just so my one day’s acquaintance at the Rainbow. Here the resemblance seemed to stop: except in this—Warburton had great learning; my acquaintance only some:—Warburton some science; my acquaintance none.

He had an opinion, too, which reminded me of Warburton. He thought that every nation, as well as every

individual, deserved whatever fate might chance to overtake them. He had no conception of the charm, that will ever be derived from bearing in remembrance the best part of every nation's character as well as every person's.

## CLIX.

## MOTIVES.

THE capacities of most men are more to be admired, I fear, than their motives.


In judging, we must, at one time, turn from actions to motives; at others from motives to actions. In some instances we must be silent, because we cannot but approve; in others because we cannot but condemn. Virtues are virtues only, when virtuously designed; and we are too often placed in situations, in which we are fated to remember and to apply the verses of Bellay, quoted in the memorials of Margaret de Valois;

' Thus Rome in Rome was sought for round;  
But nought of Rome in Rome was found.'

For men do virtuous actions, in which there being no virtue in the motives, there is no virtue in *ré*.

Many bad men, also, do no bad actions; all their sins being those of omission. All surface, they are smooth as pillars of Parian marble; yet as inaccessible to pity and to charity as porphyry or granite.

Marivaux is said to have been a microscopic observer of the human heart, and to have made it so far his particular study, as to have been able to disclose all the minute shades of our determinations, and all the minute motives by which we are governed. I do not presume



to have arrived at this knowledge. For as the connexion of facts frequently leads to results, which appear absolutely inaccessible when we are ignorant of the principles on which they are founded, so do actions lose the entire complexion of their characters, when the motives, from which they sprung, are closely investigated and thereby clearly understood.

Locke advised, that whenever we thought of any thing new, to throw it immediately upon paper. 'We may then judge of it better,' said he. Perhaps, if we did the same in respect to the conduct we witness in men, it might be equally advantageous. For when we examine strictly into things, we find, sometimes to our infinite astonishment, that Helvetius was not far from the truth when he asserted, that if memory and natural sensibility are the productive causes of all our ideas, so all our false judgments are the natural effects of our own passions and ignorance.

As some painters delineate features with precision, yet not the passions, by which those features may be animated, so writers are often more successful in correctly stating events, than in giving life to the characters that act in them. The cause of this we may, generally, trace to the difficulty of ascertaining the motives whence those actions emanated.

Some say, that the only method of judging men is to cast an eye upon their actions. No! The Reformation in England had never taken place, had Anna Boleyn been only half as ugly as Anne of Cleves. But we must stop; lest we resemble the critic who paused a long time over Velasquez's picture of 'Christ on the Cross' (now in the convent of St. Placido at Madrid),

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to discover whether the lances of the attendant soldiers were—too long or too short !

It is by their motives only we can really know men ; yet, as motives are secret and frequently undefinable, we can only judge by the best evidences we have, and those are actions. Actions are, nevertheless, imperfect criteria ; because men want opportunities to be good or to be bad, so often, that they remain, perhaps, all their lives, halting, as it were, between earth and heaven, heaven and Tartarus. Many a farmer rests under a village heap, who would fain have been a Washington ; and many a mitre disgraces the head of him who only wanted an opportunity of being a Petronius, an Æsop, or a Barbarossa.

Why man has been made as he is, it is neither for me, nor for any one, to determine.—I speak merely what I believe to be true ; and whether the multitude, or even the few, think otherwise, or not, will by no means settle the truth or the untruth. Flattery will not avail ; and Censure will only prove more effectively delusive. ‘ All the delicacies of the table,’ says Johnson, ‘ may be traced to the shambles and the dunghill ; ‘ all magnificence of building was hewn from the ‘ quarry ; and all the pomp of ornaments dug from the ‘ damp and darkness of the mine.’ Thus is it with human action. The deed is performed ; but the motive is the gem, or the dust, which remains to be dug from the quarry. Our motives, in fact, are sometimes so disguised, or mingled, that we know them not. How much more difficult, then, is it to scrutinize, to precision, the motives of others ; especially since we all know, that actions are but poor interpreters, and circumstances but too often the parents, not only of vices, but of virtues ! If

— ‘ These are the chiefest springs

To know the nature and the use of things ;’

it is no less so to guard against our being inquisitive beyond occasion, and wise beyond our strength ; since, even the greatest meanness is, occasionally, the companion of munificence ; and since we all measure truth and error by the standard of our own capacities ; and too seldom begin the study of mankind by first studying ourselves.†

When men design bad deeds, they look around for glosses and excuses ; and so pliable are faculties to desires, they find them, and are reconciled : they even seek the pleasures of vice, and hope from their enjoyment the rewards of virtue ! That crimes should reap the rewards, which virtues ought to receive, is the greatest mystery of our state. The cause of attraction is not so difficult as this. The Genius said to the Hermit of Bassora—‘ If you wish for the solution, be patient, ‘ and wait.’

#### CLX.

#### ON THE EASE WITH WHICH THE HEALTHY CAN PRESCRIBE FOR THE SICK.

BRING, one day, in earnest conversation with the poet Bloomfield, he told me, that some one had advised him to bear the pain he was fated to endure, with patience ; for that it would be all the same ‘ a hundred ‘ years hence.’ This diminutive of advice reminds one of three passages from three different countries :

‘ How readily do men at ease prescribe  
To those who ‘re sick at heart !’

This is from Terence\* ; Shakspeare has a thought analogous :—

\* Andrea ; Colman.



————— ‘ ’Tis all men’s office to speak patience  
 To those, that wring beneath the load of sorrow ;  
 But no man’s virtue, nor sufficiency,  
 To be so moral, when he shall endure  
 The like himself.’

Euripides has a similar thought ; while a Welsh poet claims equality, if not superiority :—

‘ To speak of Snowdon’s head sublime  
 Is far more easy than to climb ;  
 So he, that’s free from pain and care,  
 May bid the sick a smile to wear.’

Dives said unto Lazarus, ‘ Thou shalt sup to-morrow\*.’

## CLXI.

## WHO MAKE NO ALLOWANCES FOR TEMPTATION.

SOME actors, during the French Revolution, seem to have been desirous of retrogradation, by endeavouring to assimilate civilized society with savage ones ;—and they did so ; but when the Duke of Orleans, after the trial of Louis XVI., rose in the Assembly, and exclaimed,—‘ I vote for death !’ a murmur of horror echoed through the hall.

Lord Shaftesbury is not only right, but pre-eminently so, when he insists, that to have the natural affections is to have the chief means and power of self-enjoyment ; the highest possession and happiness of life. Equally just are his observations when he proceeds to the assertion, that to have the private affections beyond their proper sphere of subordinacy is miserable ; but to have affections, that tend neither to public nor to private good, is miserable in the highest degree.

\* Legend.

If it is true, that we can never be happy without possessing something to which we may be kind;—affection being what a German writer calls ‘the sunshine of the mind;’—it is equally so, that none can have the true marrow of humanity till they become fathers or mothers. This argument should be extended to the length of making allowances for inordinate temptation; for some temptations there are, which would almost tend to the endowment even of Parian marble with living passion. Those men, therefore, are superficial, who, with an air of superior sagacity, are always seeking bad motives for dubious actions; and making no allowances for strong feelings and great allurements.

Prejudices and partialities are the great colourists which prevent our attainment of truth. In judging of men and of women, therefore, as we know not the secrets of their hearts, we are too often unwilling, as indeed we are too frequently unable, to make allowances for strong excitements.

Men of education are, sometimes, placed by want in the midst of great—nay, overwhelming temptations. They escape by the mere force of those mental moral associations, to encourage which is one of the best designs of education. For men of education, then, to condemn a poor, ignorant, unfortunate clown, to the punishment of death for stealing a horse, a heifer, or a sheep, is a frightful exercise of a most wicked law. And yet we have some, even now, living amongst us—men of education and of vast property, too—who vindicate such laws. As Dante would say—‘Look at them, and pass on, in silent contempt. Breathe not a word!’

## CLXII.

## THE TEMPTERS AND THE TEMPTED.

WHEN the Florentines desired a pretence for attacking the town of Pietra Santa, they caused a quantity of ammunition and provisions to pass by that town, in their way to Sarzana, in the hope that the garrison, in the extremity of their want, would attack and plunder the detachment. What the Florentines expected occurred. The garrison did plunder the detachment\*, and the Florentines †, in consequence, compelled the town to submit to their authority and protection. This was like a master punishing a half-starved servant, for robbing him of money he had purposely placed in his way.

Louis XIV., learning from his envoy at the Hague (D'Avaux), that William of Orange was preparing to invade England, offered to assist James II. with as many troops as he might consider necessary to his safety; or to raise the siege of Philipsburg, and march his army into the Netherlands, in order to detain the Dutch forces in their own country. James, however, was sufficiently discreet to decline all assistance of that kind, lest it might afford a pretext to the people to mutiny against foreign troops, or to keep him in bondage after the danger of the time had subsided. James, I say, was too wise to give his enemies such a pretext for rebellion. But when Louis XIV. took possession of a great part of the Spanish dominions, and attempted to unite the crown of Spain to that of France, by plac-

\* Hist. Fior., lib. viii.

† In Vit. Laur., i. 126.

ing his grandson on the throne of that country, Queen Anne did not hesitate to bring the accusation against him, that he designed to invade the general liberties of Europe. There was no fear of a pretext here; all was legitimate and solid; for there can be no doubt as to what were the real intentions of that ambitious and vain-glorious person. Indeed, he scarcely condescended to disguise them.

Tempters and the tempted are not equally guilty; hence Macbeth is less detested than his wife. Magistrates should always consult this in their relative commitments and punishments.

‘ I think Sir Godfrey should decide the suit ;  
Who sent the thief (who stole the cash) away,  
And punished him that put it in his way.’

Some men are capable of giving the most judicious advice, yet of following the worst. The third Duke of Marlborough is said to have been of this order, and Catiline seems not far removed from it; for he declared, that if he had had honest men to work with, he should have been as capable of acting nobly, and for the benefit of his country, as he had done otherwise.

Leodamias insisted, in his accusation against Callistrates, that the adviser of a bad action is more culpable than the man who commits it; because if the act had never been advised, it had never been done. But in a cause, which he pleaded for Chabrias, he contended, that he who commits an injustice is more culpable than the person who prompts to it; since all advice is nugatory if there be not a person to execute; and since those,

who prompt to an evil, do so with a design that it shall be carried into effect by others.

From this we may infer, that both the tempter and the tempted,—if a bad action is performed,—are equally guilty; the former being the greater coward. But it is base,—pre-eminently base,—to tempt poverty with that, the mere sight of which, as it were, renders every thing ductile and obedient: money, and the want of it, being the greatest of tempters, and the greatest of orators in the parliament of vice.

If we have no right to tempt men too much, we are equally wrong in suffering them to be tempted too much by circumstances; if the power exist in us to alter them ourselves, or to assist others to alter them. It may be truly observed, therefore, that those who look carelessly and unassistingly on, share in the guilt, if any guilt is incurred.

Some are tempted by vices, for which they appear to be punished through the medium of their virtues.

To withstand temptation at the first is noble; to withstand daily and hourly, when daily and hourly placed in allurements, is—almost!—more the work of a god than of a man. Many, however, are placed after the manner in which Telemachus describes himself to have been in the island of Calypso:—‘ I was like  
‘ a man who attempts to swim a deep and rapid river.  
‘ His first efforts are vigorous, and he makes way  
‘ against the stream; but if the shores are steep, and  
‘ he cannot rest himself upon the bank, he grows weary  
‘ by degrees; his strength is exhausted: his limbs become stiff with fatigue; and he is carried away by the

‘ torrent.’ Superficial law-makers make no allowances for human temptation.

Some men first tempt, and then are mean enough, and base enough, to accuse women for suffering themselves to be tempted. Some women act in the same manner by men. Milton has a fine scene of this kind in the tenth book of ‘ Paradise Lost.’

A similar policy may often be traced in the ludicrous trade of politics. The Earl of Clare loudly stigmatized the traffic of peerages, and yet bought both his barony and his earldom. Count Swedenbourg was scarcely more ridiculous ; gravely censuring, as he did, all visionary books ; and yet recounting in his own a multitude of interviews and conversations, that he insisted he had held with angels in heaven and with devils in hell.

Johnson was wisely alive to the evils of temptation. ‘ Humanly speaking,’ said he, ‘ there is a certain degree of temptation which will overcome any virtue. ‘ Now, in so far as you approach temptation to a man, ‘ you do him an injury ; and if he is overcome, you ‘ share in his guilt.’ And this reminds me of Ambrogio de Camaldules ; for when he came to a convent, the sisters of which lived in harmony and innocence :— ‘ Happy garden!’ exclaimed he, ‘ where the voice of ‘ the tempter has never yet been heard.’

## CLXIII.

## WEAKNESSES OF EMINENT MEN.

ALL men fear, dislike, and grieve ; all men desire, hope, and rejoice ; though, of course, different men

feel those passions unequally. All men, however, are not susceptible of love, of hatred, of envy, or of despair. The strongest men, too, have their various points of weakness. Johnson united moral credulity to mental vigour, and he dishonoured his strength by arguing for victory rather than for truth.

Men, also, have their master wants. Addison, though richly endowed, was deficient in vigour. Locke aspired to imagination. He was zealous, and, on great occasions, vigorous, both in speech and action ; yet he was, naturally, timid and irresolute. He could plan for others ; but, I think, if required, he could never have carried his own plans into execution. He could plant the seed, as it were ; but he would never, perhaps, have been able either to plough or to harrow, to reap or to mow.

#### CLXIV.

WHOSE ACTIONS CANNOT BE ADEQUATELY APPRECIATED.

THERE are some excellent deeds, and some admirable laws, which, from the nature of the subjects, or the circumstances, can never command their merited applause. As an instance of the latter, we may refer to Pliny's account of the conduct of a wife, on learning from her husband that he was afflicted with an incurable disease ; and of the former, we may allude to Napoleon's edict prohibiting the creation of eunuchs on pain of death.

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## CLXV.

WHOSE CHARACTERS DO NOT APPEAR TILL THE TIME FOR.  
ACTION ARRIVES.

SOME men are so discreet and profound in observance, that they appear neither equal to circumstances, nor masters of evil, till the time arrives in which they can seize opportunities. Thus, it is said of Henry IV. of England, that his vices did not become visible till his ambition brought him in sight of a crown; and then it was he discovered himself to be, not what he had previously appeared, but gloomy and unjust, tyrannical and cruel.

## CLXVI.

MEN IN MASQUERADE.

MEN are the more difficult to be known, since they seem seldom to be more at their pleasure than when acting in masquerade. They even remind us of the feast and ceremony of the Wirtschafft.

Lord Shaftesbury says, that if a native of Ethiopia were to be transported to Venice during a carnival, it is probable he would be some time before he discovered that a whole people could be so fantastic, as, upon agreement, to practise on one another such a universal confusion of characters and persons. This disguise is not practised in the times of the carnival alone. It is (only not quite in so evident a manner) the common custom of every-day life. If men were as they appear, we could understand them at first sight



nearly as well as professors can read musical notes. I must say, however, that I think this masquerade system is going out of fashion. Men are becoming ashamed of it. Nature, perhaps, shows itself more now than in any former period. No one is scorned for showing his heart; though there are but too many ever on the watch to take advantage of the display.

## CLXVII.

## PERSONS WHOM IT IS DIFFICULT TO KNOW.

It is as difficult to estimate some men's characters, as it is to determine whether the guelder-rose, the hydrangea, and some other plants, exhibit the appearances naturally belonging to them, or whether they are the artificial effect of permanent culture. An Italian writer \* has well observed, that a large landscape by Poussin, or by Salvator Rosa, is seen in half the time that it takes to examine even a small one by Claude; since that small one embraces so many objects, and admits so ample a perspective, that a spectator almost anticipates the fatigue of a long journey. Thus is it with certain orders of men. Some we may know at a mere glance; others only after a long study. In paintings, an apostle may be known by his rags; a Madonna by a circle; an angel by his wings: but in real life, no warrior can be known by his sash; no counsellor by his robe; no priest by his surplice; nor any statesman by his riband or his garter. There is no 'royal road'

\* Lanzi. *Storia Pittorica*.

to an extensive knowledge of man; for no one can know man amply, unless he has suffered. Thousands, however, know sufficiently well to be able to take the best advantage of every one they meet. But to ascertain how little real knowledge that implies, no one needs travel a thousand miles from home.

Warburton gives us one great cause why it is so difficult to judge of persons in general. 'It arises,' says he, 'from that obscurity, which is thrown over the character through the contest and strife between nature and custom, reason and appetite, truth and opinion.' It may be here, too, remarked, that we are most esteemed when the utmost of our capacities are not fully known. This, however, cannot always be the case. For some are sufficiently fortunate as to be the more valued the more explicitly they are searched; and this serves to account for the surprise of Horace Walpole, that in writing men's lives, biographers should so frequently become enamoured of their subjects. 'One would think,' says he, 'that the nicer disquisition one makes into the life of any one, the less reason we should find to love and admire him.' No! the more deeply we search, the more springs of action we find, and the more we feel, in consequence, disposed to tolerate imperfection. Were we made fully acquainted with all the motives even of a Catiline, a Borgia, a Philip II., a Danton, or a Robespierre, we should, perhaps, have less reason to blush for the depravity of a certain class of politicians; consciousness of evil making even harsh judges merciful. If we form too debased an opinion of mankind, we wrong the in-

tegrity of all men's natures : if too elevated an one, we court disappointment at every step. In the consideration of all which, happy is the hope, that philosophers will, one day, know more than at present they even guess at ; and taking their stand upon the poles of society, they will not only, as it were,

‘ Behold new seas beyond another sky ;’

but acquire new species of vision with which to observe, compare, and judge of them. Three thousand years hence, and the whole character of man may assume the colour, as it were, of

————— ‘ Another morn  
Risen on mid-noon.’

For that man is a progressive being, can, I think, admit of little reasonable doubt.

#### CLXVIII.

WHO ARE NOT APPRECIATED TILL AFTER THEY ARE DEAD.

THIS is but too commonly the case. ‘ You do not ‘ know me,’ said Henry IV. of France to Bossompierre and the Duke of Guise ; ‘ but I shall die one of these ‘ days, and then you will know the difference between ‘ other men and myself.’

Great warriors are appreciated during their lives or never ; great statesmen are mostly so ; great writers seldom. These must die, as it were, before they begin essentially to live ; greatness of merit and slowness of appreciation being the warp and the woof of true literary reputation.



Some are not to be judged by their actions merely. They must be associated with the age in which they live. After this manner we must judge of Wickliffe, and a multitude of others.

It is, also, to be remembered, that injury in governments is produced by error in judgment, much more often than by design; and that skill is more often wanted to discover right than virtue to propose it, or to cause it to be maintained.

The Spaniards acted upon the idea, that all, who would not be converted to Christianity, might be hunted like wild beasts\*; and the Greeks seem to have been actuated by a similar spirit, when those they conquered would not consent to be slaves. Even Plato† and Aristotle entertained‡ analogous ideas. They both countenanced slavery!

## CLXIX.

## WHO ARE CONDEMNED FOR THE WANT OF GIVING EXPLANATION.

THE eggs of a glow-worm shine in the dark as well as herself.

I cannot agree with Madame de Stael, that a lie, a fortnight old, is as good as truth; for then there would be little or no use in offering explanations.

Men, who are too high, or too proud, to enter into explanations, are exceedingly unfortunate. Charles I., for

\* Solonzanus.

† De Leg.

‡ Polit. i. c. 3. vii. 14.

instance, laboured long, and his memory is still pursued by a belief, on the part of many, that he caused the massacre of the Protestants in Ireland.

The late Duke of Portland seldom condescended (as it would be termed) to explain any thing. ‘His Grace,’ wrote Burke to Laurence\*, ‘is not in the habit of explaining and defending his conduct; and, therefore, he is wholly at the mercy of others in every step he sets.’

Explanation is, at all times, worthy the attention and even skill not only of a statesman but of a warrior. Nelson’s conduct at Naples, in regard to the execution of Caraccioli, for a long time disgraced not only his name, but his nation. It is now well known, that a deception was practised upon him by the Queen of Naples; and that through the medium of Lady Hamilton, wife to the British ambassador. Explanations are beneath no one: even kings might gain by them.

There are some statements, I say, let them be ever so untrue, that demand a prompt, unequivocal contradiction: for unless they are denied, they descend to posterity. That of Antomarchi, in regard to Sir Hudson Lowe, may be cited as an example. That physician relates, that Governor Lowe, when he learnt the death of Napoleon, informed him and others of the deceased Emperor’s suite, that the British government had become so much more favourably disposed, that he had even been ordered to announce to Napoleon, that the time was approaching when his liberty might, possibly,

\* May 18, 1797.

be restored to him ; and that his Majesty, George IV., would not be the last to accelerate the term of his captivity. This account has never been denied ; at least to my knowledge ; and I have kept myself on the watch to hear it. It may descend, therefore, to posterity.

If true, Sir Hudson ought to have communicated the intelligence to the person whom he long knew to be dying ; as it might have tended to lighten the burden of his captivity. To communicate it to his attendants, after his death, was but a sorry, nay, an indigent delivery of conscience indeed ! Lord Byron used to say, ‘ Be any thing rather than mean.’

## CLXX.

## WHO NEGLECT SMALL THINGS.

THERE is a maxim, highly important to all those who desire to be easy and comfortable in their respective spheres ; and it is this :—‘ Take care of small matters ; and do not disdain minute particulars ;’ and this reminds me of the late Lord Clermont. When I was young, this excellent nobleman, then generally called ‘ Old Lord Clermont,’ grey-headed, and, altogether, one of the most venerable looking of men, frequently passed the village, in which I was then living. There were two bridges, over which every one that passed that way was compelled to go ; but his lordship would never ride over them, whether on horseback or in a carriage. He always walked. In these peregrinations he frequently found me angling upon one or other of these bridges ; and being exceedingly affable, he would every now and then enter into conversation with me ; and

one day he even condescended to give me advice. ‘Young man,’ said his lordship, ‘take care of small matters. You are in the way of handling comparatively large sums ; but do not let that make you regardless of little ones. Lord Orford and I, many years ago, were not sufficiently attentive to this rule ; but I have learned to know better ; and let my advice be as an example to you : for, depend upon it, shillings are more powerful than pounds in effecting the ruin of a man in the middle station of life.’

As this maxim is a very important one, I desire to fix it steadfastly in the minds of the younger portion of my readers. The better to do so, I transcribe a passage from Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, by which they may learn what kind of a personage this excellent adviser was. ‘I have scarcely known a man more fitted for a companion of kings and queens than Lord Clermont. Nature had formed his person in an elegant mould, uniting delicacy of configuration with the utmost bodily activity, the soundest constitution, and uninterrupted health. His manners easy, quiet, even, yet lively and ingratiating, never varied. Endowed with great suavity and equality of temper, possessing a very ample fortune, almost a stranger to bodily indisposition, and having no issue, male or female, he enjoyed every hour of human life.’ A little farther on, Sir Nathaniel says : ‘Notwithstanding a close connexion with the Prince of Wales, few noblemen were better received at St. James’s, and scarcely any were detained a longer time in conversation by his majesty (George the Third) whenever he appeared at the drawing-room ; nor was

‘ he less acceptable at the court of Versailles, where he  
‘ and Lady Clermont repaired almost every year.’ His  
death was happy:—‘ an augmenting weakness and ex-  
‘ tenuation, which left undiminished all his faculties,  
‘ senses, and powers of conversation, gently conveyed,  
‘ or rather wafted him out of life.’

The name of Lord Clermont is associated, in my mind, with that of Mr. Fox; for near the spot in which Lord Clermont gave me the advice described, that celebrated person one day passed,—in his way to the Earl of Albemarle’s,—when his chaise broke down; and it was with some difficulty that I extricated him from the danger in which he was placed. He ordered another chaise at the neighbouring inn, and then inquired of the landlord who ‘ the young gentleman ’ was, that had assisted him out of the carriage. Having learned it, he came smiling up, with his left hand in his breeches pocket, and his right in the fold of his waistcoat, and accosted me thus: ‘ Young gentleman, I am  
‘ very much obliged to you; and the more so on ac-  
‘ count of your name.’ On hearing this, I blushed, and felt overwhelmed with confusion. ‘ My name,  
‘ sir?’ ‘ Yes,’ answered the good-humoured statesman, ‘ your name; for though many a *buck* has led  
‘ me into a scrape, you are the only *Buck (e)* that ever  
‘ got me out of one!’

Had Mr. Fox attended to little things, he had been the first man of his age.

We must not, however, respect small things too much; for by saving one sovereign we may, occasionally, lose ten. On journeys, for instance, how often have I



lost days, and been obliged to take circuitous rounds, merely from the wish to save a few shillings! I look upon these littlenesses with resentment. The rule ought to be, save when you ought to save; and regard little things when they do not so far interfere with greater ones as to put them to hazard. I shall pursue this subject farther, when we come to the subject of ‘Lovers of Minutiæ.’

## CLXXI.

## WHO ARE BLAMED UNJUSTLY.

————— ‘Call me a fool;  
Trust not my reading; nor my observation,  
Which with experimental seal doth warrant  
The tenour of my book: trust not my age,  
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,  
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here,  
Under some biting error.’

*Shakspeare; Much Ado about Nothing.*

THE Goths, under Alaric, possessed Rome only five days; the Vandals, under Genseric, only fourteen; and the hand of Totila was arrested by the energy and argument of Belisarius: what time, then, could those barbarians have had for dilapidation; especially when their whole appetite was directed to the acquirement of plunder?

Some attribute the abasement of the Roman language\*, and the origin of Gothic architecture, to the

\* Tiraboschi—*Vetera Humiliatorum Monumenta*, &c. For the origin of the Italian language, vide Muratori, *Antiq. Medii Ævi*. tom. ii. p. 989, fol. For the origin of Italian Poesy, tom. iii. p. 661.

Goths; but others \*, perhaps, with still more justice, ascribe both to the natives of Italy themselves.

Many a man's name has been consecrated by absence and persecution; while the fame and influence of a General rise and fall with the success or non-success of his arms. Are the wicked visited by afflictions? their afflictions are judgments! Are the good overwhelmed by misfortunes? they are trials. But success is the criterion by which most men judge both of wisdom and virtue.

When the clergyman of Stratford on Avon cut down Shakspeare's mulberry-tree, because it overshadowed his window, the populace were so indignant that he was obliged to leave the town: and the people declared, that no one of his name should ever afterwards be suffered to reside in Stratford. Yet when Garrick instituted a festival in honour of the same poet, the same persons looked upon him as a magician, and insisted that the continual rain, which fell during the jubilee, was no other than a judgment from Heaven.

Gibbon † attributes the loss, which Gratian sustained in the esteem of the Romans, to his virtues being the results of education, rather than the hardy ones arising from experience and adversity. In reference to Philagricus, who had been stigmatized by some historians, yet praised by Gregory Nazianzen, the same historian says ‡, that, for the credit of human nature, he was always pleased to discover some good qualities in those whom party had represented as tyrants and monsters.

\* Marquis de Maffei's Verona Illustra.

† V. 2.

‡ III. 365.

‘ The experienced merit \* of a reigning monarch,’ says he, ‘ is acknowledged by his subjects with reluctance, ‘ and frequently denied with partial and discontented ‘ murmurs ; while from the opening virtues of his suc- ‘ cessor they fondly conceive the most unbounded hopes ‘ of private as well as public felicity.’

Such was the hope at the appointment of the late re- gency ; and the Whigs attempted to throw great odium on the Prince, because he forsook them at that period. But could the Prince have carried on the govern- ment ? I contend that he could not. Mr. Fox was dead : and neither sufficient power, sufficient fame, nor sufficient talent, remained with those he left behind. Lloyd † says that the people honour those most who employ most ; princes those who have most. An in- sinuation of this kind was thrown out against the Prince ; but it is more than probable, that, from long experience, he had acquired an ample knowledge of the strength, views, and complexion of the party, by which he has since been so unwarrantably libelled and condemned.

## CLXXII.

## DIFFICULT AND EASY VIRTUES.

‘ What, what is Virtue, but repose of mind,  
A pure, ethereal calm that knows no storm ;  
Above the reach of wild Ambition’s wind,  
Above those passions, that this world deform,  
And torture man ;—a proud, malignant worm !’

THUS sings the wizard ; and those who love the dead

\* III. 107.

† State Worthies.

repose of virtue may celebrate the apparent beauty of the sentiment. But I cannot but confess, that I think: a guilty man, labouring under punishment for a real crime, is more to be pitied than an innocent one, undergoing the same penalty for an imaginary one. For to the latter, the future is all hope: to the former, all despair.

Paley defines very erroneously, when he calls virtue the doing good to mankind, 'in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness.' There is, on the contrary, as it were,

' A smooth, short space of yellow sand,  
Between it and the greener land \*.'

There is this distinction between being good and being virtuous. He may be called good, who does humane actions without having had any temptations against which to combat; and he virtuous, who has contended successfully against temptations, and performed good actions in spite of them. I should call Newton, for instance, good; but I am not certain whether he ought to be dignified with the epithet virtuous; since neither his temperature, passions, nor fortune, laid him open to those allurements of pleasure and power, or those temptations of penury and want, by which the majority of mankind are so deluded, persecuted, and enthralled. He lived, for the most part, the life of a hermit:

' Above those cares and visionary joys,  
That so perplex the fond, impassion'd heart  
Of ever-cheated, ever-trusting man.'


\* Byron.

Virtues imply struggles; hence the propriety of a celebrated passage in Milton's 'Comus':—

'Mortals, that would follow me,  
Love Virtue; she alone is free.  
She can teach ye how to climb  
Higher than the sphery chime;  
Or if Virtue feeble were,  
Heaven itself would stoop to her.'

The strongest tea in China (the *yu-tien*) scarcely colours the water. It has been said, that a thing being in itself an evil, or a crime, does not prove that cases may not exist, in which it absolutely changes its nature. Assuredly, a virtue may be carried to excess, and a crime may be construed into a virtue; though it can never have the truth and actual basis of essential virtue. Who, then, may be esteemed virtuous? Those, whose general characteristics are justice and benevolence; fortitude, temperance, chastity, and prudence, as regarding themselves; piety, reverence, and resignation, as it respects the Author of their being.

We may compare some men's virtues to particular plants. Some resemble the *truffle*, which never appears above ground, requires little air for its nourishment, and no light. Some resemble the *sugar maple*, which affords the greater quantity of sirup the more often it is tapped. Some resemble the *hassagay*, which, though one of the largest of African trees, has very diminutive flowers. And some remind us of the *prickly caper*, which, though common in the hedge-rows of France, can only be made to flower in England in a stove, and even then only with very great care.



Difficult virtues shine in a selfish age with all the brilliancy of Raffaele's angel in the Deliverance of St. Peter. The sentinels are illumined by the moon and a torch ; yet the light of the moon, as well as of the torch, fade before the splendour of the visitant.

Easy virtues shine too ; but they are eclipsed by difficult ones ; while some few operate like the lights of life,—

—————‘ To burn a thousand years,  
Useless, unseen, like lamps in sepulchres.’

The opinion of Hierax of Leontium, though absurd, was not quite so absurd as many ecclesiastical writers have supposed. He refused heaven to all children ; and that upon the ground that, as they had encountered no trials, they had conquered no difficulties, and ought, therefore, to enjoy no reward ; for what, according to Milton,

—————‘ Is faith, love, virtue, unessay’d \*?’

Hierax was far more ridiculous in his assumption, that Melchizedek, King of Salem, was no other than the Holy Ghost. Yet he had grounds even for this. At least the grounds of a mystery. For it is written in St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, that Melchizedek was ‘ without father, without mother, without descent ; ‘ having neither beginning of days, nor end of life : but ‘ made like unto the Son of God.’

The virtues of some men prevail no longer than they are surrounded by enemies. They cease the moment in which they attain the summit of their wishes.

\* Paradise Lost, ix. 335.


We may instance Pulteney. The moment he mastered Walpole, his virtue tottered ; he paused, and was undone.

Rich men can be honest and honourable at very little expense, either of ability or of labour ; yet they are neither more honest, nor more honourable, than poor ones. There is merit in being honourable ; but none in being honest. The laws, and the customs,—nay, the very vices of society,—demand as much. These, then, among the rich are easy virtues ; among the poor, difficult ones. Men, who practise easy virtues, are, nevertheless, far more vain, censorious, and presumptuous, than those who practise difficult ones ; and this notwithstanding one difficult act of grace throws all easy ones to the comparative distance of a thousand miles.

We are nourished by our good qualities in a manner of which we are oftentimes unconscious ; as the sap, descending through the bark, having been modified by the leaves, is the hidden cause of the growth of the tree. Virtues, however, like commodities in commerce, abound most where they are most in demand ; as the supply of atmospherical moisture is most abundant in latitudes where evaporation is most rapid.

The virtues of some, in fact, are as easy of activity as a rosary, consisting of fifteen repetitions of the Lord's Prayer, and one hundred and fifty salutations of the Blessed Virgin. He, who wishes so to gain, may gain ; his difficulties being as lions without claws and eagles without talons. ' God,' says Jeremy Taylor\*, ' never

\* Holy Living and Dying.



‘ crowns those virtues, which are merely faculties and  
‘ dispositions.’

‘ To persuade mankind that virtue is its own reward,’ wrote Cassius to Cicero, ‘ is, I fear, of too much difficulty.’ I fear it is ; insomuch, that I think those who ought to reward it have no right to preach it. But certain, on the other hand, it is, that Plato is correct when he asserts, that vice is a disease of the mind, originating in a misunderstanding of men’s own interests\* ; and that a course of virtuous conduct ensures that tranquillity and harmony† which is the mind’s proper inheritance.

‘ Nothing that’s ill should dwell in such a temple‡.’

One thing, also, it is wise to consider ; viz., that virtue should signalize itself in action ; though I will not call it a vice, as Massinger does §, where it is indolent ; nor will I say, with Shakspeare, that ‘ if our virtues go  
‘ not from us, ’twere all alike, as if we had them not||.’ We had better have them, even if we do not use them ; for if we have them not, something that is vicious will assuredly occupy their place. Be, then (after a passage in Francesco Redi¶), ‘ in manners holy, innocent, and  
‘ wise ; and bold (with meekness) when virtue is to be  
‘ guarded.’

\* De Rep., iv.

† Ibid., ix.

‡ Tempest, act i. sc. 6.

§ Maid of Honour, act i. sc. 1.

|| Measure for Measure, act i. sc. 2.

¶ Santi costumi, e per virtù baldanza, &c.



## CLXXIII.

WHO UNITE ELEGANCE TO STRENGTH; AND VULGARITY  
TO ELEGANCE.


SOME men,—elegant and yet strong,—remind us of the suspension bridge at Schaffhausen ; in passing over which, even a child may feel it tremble under him ; and yet a waggon, heavily laden, may pass over it without danger.

SOME, on the contrary, are tenderly alive to sensibilities ; and yet give a power and a strength to others, which Nature has denied to their own faculties and fortunes.

Falkland combined both. For though elegant, he was strong ; and not only strong in himself, but capable of imparting corresponding strength to others. When Charles I. laboured to subvert the liberties of his country, Falkland gave great assistance to the parliament ; but when the parliament indicated an intention of overturning the constitution, then he returned to the king ; and his example was followed by a multitude of other persons.

Dante mixes the terrible with the ridiculous ; but having no design to exhibit either the ludicrous or the burlesque, his extravagance wears an air of sublimity.

That a classical mind may employ low images and even vulgar allusions, was exemplified in Mr. Windham. He had gaiety and high polish ; yet, at times, disdained all order and decorum. His language was a union of elegance and vulgarity ; and, as a political



character, he had, to balance with many excellences, one fault, which required all the philosophy of his political friends to tolerate: he frequently allowed himself to be irritated into saying more than they wished him to say. He, in fact, sometimes let out secrets. He was like a wide river, during a slight frost,—brilliant and brittle. He even proceeded so far as to defend the custom of bull-baiting, in the House of Commons. On what ground? that it tended to keep alive the spirit of the British constitution!

Many good writers, and even some sublime ones\*, have mingled the common with the great; uniting, like Moscow and Constantinople, every thing that is magnificent with all that is mean. Paley, for instance, in his 'Natural Philosophy,' refers to some of the most familiar subjects in nature, to illustrate the all-important subject on which he wrote: Tassoni, in 'La Secchia Rapita,' blends great delicacy and sublime imagery with irresistible traits of humour; and Purcell was as eminent, as a composer of sacred music, as he was of catches and glees. Tintoretto, however, was less fortunate; for he placed the cheerful countenances of his boon companions on the shoulders of saints and cherubim.

Some few unite discordant qualities in another way: an instance of which we may bring, in what Madame Roland says of Mons. Grangeneuve †, viz.

\* 'I will make Babylon a possession for the bittern and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction.'—*Isaiah*, ch. xiv.

† Appeal, p. 144.'

that he was the best of men, with a countenance of the least promise ; and that though his understanding was of the common level, his soul was so truly great, that he performed noble actions with a simplicity which indicated, that he had no suspicion what those actions would have cost any other person than himself.

We have lately had a curious instance of the union of genius, elegance, and vulgarity. In whom ? Lord Byron. He raked the cemetery of his ancestors for a skull ! he caused it to be mounted in silver ; and then, after the manner of the Scandinavians, used it as a cup at banquets and carousals. ‘ Quaff,’ such was the inscription :—

‘ Quaff, whilst thou canst ; another race,  
When thou and thine like me are sped,  
May rescue thee from earth’s embrace,  
And rhyme and revel with the dead.’

Heroes, and even statesmen, occasionally exhibit, either in their motives, their sentiments, or their actions, contrasts at once curious and decisive. Who is there, living in the recollection of ancient Greece, but remembers Epaminondas, not only with admiration, but with reverence ? Diodorus gives him every virtue ; yet his aggression on Arcadia must, I fear, be associated with some of the worst deeds of Sparta.

Who has not admired the patriotism of Timoleon ? yet he was guilty of many acts of injustice, and some cruelties, to which we may even apply the ignominious epithet of atrocious.

As to the Athenians, the picture of Parrhasius of Ephesus truly personified them as a combination of

contrasts ;—brave and cowardly ; proud and humble ; corrupt and honest ; elevated and mean. Perhaps Demades may be said to have represented them : for he sailed along, and, in part, directed the popular phrenzy in the pay of Philip ; and yet he it was, who reproached him for his levity at the battle of Chæronea.

Lollius, so much celebrated by Horace, was a severe and just judge at Rome ; yet a sordid and rapacious governor in the distant provinces. Lucullus, though proud, cruel, and austere in command, was, in private, humane, polite, and compassionate.

Who knows not the political merits of the celebrated French minister, Colbert ? As a man, he is described as having been of a stern aspect, of an air gloomy, and of a mien low and dejected. Who could have imagined that one, so characterized, could ever have been an honest encourager of the arts, and, at the same time, the master of many mistresses ?—‘ What a chimera is ‘ man ! ’ exclaims Pascal, ‘ what a confused chaos ! ‘ what a subject of contradiction ! a professed judge of ‘ all things, and yet a feeble worm of the earth ! the ‘ great depository and guardian of truth ; and yet a mere ‘ huddle of uncertainty ! the glory and scandal of the ‘ universe.’

## CLXXIV. .

## WHO JUDGE OTHERS BY THEMSELVES.

IF we judge mankind, *en masse*, by ourselves, we shall often err ; but if we judge individual man from what we

know of aggregate man, we shall not err so often. To judge all by ourselves is hazardous ; frequently unjust ; and now and then fatal. The motives of men are compounded differently in all ; and we must not disguise, that while some give too much latitude to wrong constructions, others are too apt to deceive themselves by subtleties, half-knowledge, and false refinements. As to our judgments in respect to the dead, beautifully has it been said,—‘ walk lightly over their graves.’

The subject of my chapter reminds me of the father of Tasso. ‘ The mind of man,’ said that excellent person, in a letter to Tassi, ‘ has so many caverns in which to hide itself, that it is difficult to discover them all. I measure others by my own ; nor am I willing to believe of others that which I am not able to prove in myself.’

No method of judging can be more effective in some instances ; none more fallacious and delusive in others ; hence the custom, which most men adopt in respect to its application, is one prevailing cause why we have so many false judgments and erroneous appreciations. It is not for the good of mankind, that every one should erect a court of judicature in his own mind, as it were, and act therein not only as jury and judge, but as witness. If men would take an accurate measure of themselves, there might be great justice in judging others by themselves, in a variety of cases ; but they do not.

Dr. Ferguson says \*, and very justly, that no error can be more fatal than to rest our own choice of good qua-

\* Inst. p. 169. 3rd Ed.

lities on the supposition, that we are to meet with such qualities in other men ; and he extends the remark by observing, that it is an equal error to suppose, that a want of merit in our fellow-creatures can justify us in dispensing with that justice and liberality of conduct, which all men ought to maintain.

Herodotus makes a shrewd remark :—‘ This I know,’ says he, speaking of the Argians and Spartans \*, ‘ that if all men were to bring their domestic disgraces together, for the purpose of exchanging with their neighbours, they would no sooner have inspected those of others, than they would all, most willingly, take back their own.’ This is doubtful ; but if applied to personal foibles, it may, perhaps, be esteemed, for the most part, correct. But if it is correct, how can the parties be fit judges of other persons ? Dugald Stewart is, nevertheless, correct in asserting, that ‘ it is only by retiring into ourselves that we can obtain a key to the characters of others ; and it is only by observing and comparing the characters of others, that we can thoroughly understand and appreciate our own.’

This is, certainly, the only way : all I contend for is, that men, for the most part, do not do this with accuracy. They mistake themselves, as often as they mistake others. And here we may remember with advantage a passage in Pascal’s discourse on the Misery of Man :—‘ All our endeavours after greatness,’ says that excellent person, ‘ proceed from nothing but a desire of being surrounded by a multitude of persons and affairs,

\* Lib. vii.

‘ that may hinder us from looking into ourselves, *which is a view none of us can bear.*’ This is true; we cannot bear such a depth of insight: hence the justice of Plato’s observation \*, that every one being at war with himself; the greatest, first, and best victory he can obtain, is that which he gains over himself.

It frequently happens that none are so ignorant of themselves as those who boast, inordinately, of self-knowledge. Few knew mankind better than Johnson; yet how little even Johnson knew of himself, we may, in no small measure, judge by what he said of himself:— ‘ No man knows the rules of true politeness better than I do; and *no man more attentively practises them.*’ Could an Indian of Massachusetts have made a greater mistake? If a man like Johnson could be thus self-ignorant, what right have we to expect the general mass of mankind to be better informed?

## CLXXV.

## WHO JUDGE MEN BY THEIR COUNTENANCES.

## I.

If we lay our hand upon the frame of a violoncello, we can distinguish the manner in which it vibrates, as to gravity or acuteness, without exercising the faculties either of hearing or seeing. We recognize by the touch.

By geometry we acquire the art of measuring surfaces, and finding the contents of all figures: by means

\* D; Legibus.

of an electrometer, we have the power of ascertaining not only the presence of electricity, but the precise quantity with which each body is charged. By means of the sextant and nautical tables we discover the longitude and latitude. Astronomers, also, know the distances of planets by ascertaining their periods; and their periods by knowing their distances. But is there any fixed rule or mode of ascertaining human characters by the mere observance of external signs? This is a question not so easily to be answered as most persons suppose.

There cannot be a doubt, that, had symptoms been as constantly observed, and as faithfully noted, as the anatomy of the human structure, the knowledge of disease had been in a far more satisfactory state than it now is: the main difference between one medical practitioner and another being allowed to exist in their relative capacity of discerning the nature of diseases; a faculty, we are told, widely differing in different persons. This part of science, however, has lately been materially assisted by Laennec's invention of the Stethoscope; by the application of which instrument (a wooden cylinder) to the surface of the chest, and resting the ear against the other end, the deviations of the actions going on in the lungs, and the motion of the heart and blood-vessels, are, in a great measure, detected.

Delightful would it be, if a similar instrument could be invented by which we might gain a knowledge of the human mind and character!

Some insist that Nature herself has furnished such means by merely contemplating the countenance.



This fact, or supposition, leads to a remembrance of the once famous enthusiast, Jacob Behmen. For, going one day into a field near Gorlitz, he sat down; and beholding the herbs and grass by the 'inward light' which shone within him, saw into their secret uses and properties, through the medium of their figures, signatures, and lineaments. That is, he knew their characters, as it were, by their countenances.

We are told that those ladies, who fell in love with Henry of Lorraine, could always tell, by their emotions, whether he were present or not, without seeing or hearing that he was so. This was a faculty distinct from physiognomy. Whether it were real, or merely assumed, I cannot take upon me to assert; but Ben Haravad pretended to a skill much higher. For he presumed to know by the countenance, whether the soul, which animated the person he looked at, was created at the moment in which it was united to the body, or whether it had transmigrated from another place.

Seeing and hearing, it would appear, have no need to be taught us. We are told that we hear and see from nature. Yet what more deceptive than the faculties of both? One of the grand objects of chemical science is to ascertain the various elements of which material substances are composed; and since such, also, is the presumed benefit of physiognomy, in regard to the analysis of character, we are bound to inquire rather than to assert.

When Fiesca was planning the conspiracy against the authorities of Naples, Paulo Panca took occasion

to whisper to him, that he knew he was brooding over some great and dangerous project. 'I have observed 'the sudden changes of your countenance,' said he. 'You are engaged in meditating an enterprise that may 'ultimately lead to your ruin.'

Perturbations are, no doubt, indicated by the countenance: for it is much easier to control our speech than to disguise our features. 'Why,' inquires Belvidera in *Venice Preserved*,

——' dwells that busy cloud upon thy face ?  
 ———— why, when the world  
 Is wrapt in rest, why choosest then my love  
 To wander up and down in horrid darkness ?  
 Why starts he now, and looks as if he wish'd  
 His fate were finished ?'

Thus too, Almeida, in reference to Osmyn, in *Congreve's Mourning Bride*;

' See where he stands, folded and fixed to earth,  
 Stiffening in thought; a statue among statues.'

Thus, also, in Lord Byron's tragedy of *Faliero* :—

———' Ah ! why  
 Do you still keep apart, and walk alone,  
 And let such strong emotion stamp your brow,  
 As not betraying their full import; yet  
 Disclose too much ?'

After a manner still more picturesque, the Duke of Norfolk, in Shakspeare's *Henry the Eighth*, describes the perturbation of Cardinal Wolsey :—

——' Some strange commotion  
 Is in his brain. He bites his lip, and starts;  
 Stops on a sudden, looks upon the ground,

Then lays his finger on his temple; straight  
 Springs out into fast gait. Then stops again,  
 Strikes his breast hard; and anon he casts  
 His eyes against the moon; in most strange postures  
 We have seen him set himself.'

Other passages, from the same inimitable observer,  
 may be quoted. For instance :—

'The image of a wicked, heinous fault,  
 Lives in his eye. That close aspect of his  
 Does show the mood of a much troubled breast.'

Again :—

'Show me his picture! Let me see his eyes;  
 That when I see another such a man,  
 I may avoid him.'

In Troilus and Cressida :—

————— 'Tis often seen,  
 A virtuous, or a vicious, spirit looks out  
 In every limb and motion of the body.'

In the Rape of Lucrece :—

'By physiognomy we may behold  
 The face distinctly cyphering the heart,  
 And in its manners most expressly told.'

But in Macbeth we have a different reading :—

————— 'There is no art,  
 To find the mind's construction in the face.'

And Horace furnishes an example of similar inconsistency. In one passage he writes :—

————— 'Fronte nulla fides;'

In another :—

'Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,

Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ  
Ipse sibi tradit spectator\*.

In Milton's *Arcades* we read—

'Stay, gentle swain : for though in this disguise,  
I see bright honour sparkle in your eyes.'

And in Sylvester's '*Du Bartas*:'—

'But yet, whate'er he do, or can devise,  
Disguised glory shineth in his eyes.'

These passages recall to our recollection a still finer one in Virgil ; that wherein Evander is described surveying the eyes, mouth, and whole comportment of his guest †. They remind us, also, of a celebrated picture in *Paradise Lost* :—

————— ' his face  
Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd, and care  
Sat on his faded cheek ; but under brows  
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride,  
Waiting revenge : cruel his eye, but cast  
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold  
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather  
(Far other once beheld in bliss) condemned  
For ever now to have their lot in pain.'

## II.

FUSELI, when at Paris, was offered to be introduced to Napoleon, then First Consul of France, by David the painter ; but he refused. 'When I look at David,' said he, 'I can never divest my mind of the atrocities of the French Revolution ; nor can I separate them

\* *De Arte Poet.* 180.

† *Vide Æn.* viii. v. 152.

‘ from the part which he had then acted, for they are ‘ stamped upon his—countenance.’ And here we may remember what Plutarch says in regard to Marius, Sylla, and Pyrrhus. The aspect of Marius was so terrific, that the Gaul, sent to assassinate him, threw down his sword and fled. That of Pyrrhus was equally terrible ; hence, when the soldier lifted his sword to decapitate him, he could but with great difficulty execute his purpose. The countenance of Sylla, too, was so indicative of ferocity and rule, that a Chalcidian physiognomist insisted, that it would be a great wonder if he did not, one day, become the head of a state.

Sulzer declares the soul to be seen in the body :—Perreau \* asserts, that a first glance at a villain’s countenance is sufficient to detect his depravity ; and Philostratus relates †, that one of the kings of India told Apollonius of Tyana, that youths, admitted into the schools of philosophy, were judged of in a particular manner by their physiognomy.

Nicolai insists, that physiognomy discovers the good side of moral character, rather than the evil ; except when agitated by those passions which lead to evil. Michael Angelo appears, also, to have had some prejudices in favour of this art : for, one day, seeing the statue of St. Mark in the church of St. Michael at Florence, ‘ If that statue resemble St. Mark,’ said he, ‘ it is clear from his countenance, that no one ought to ‘ doubt the authenticity of his writings.’

\* Consid. Physiques et Morales.

† Lib. ii. c. 12.

Notwithstanding all this, I seldom reflect on the decisions of those, who pretend to be more than commonly skilful in this art ; but I remember, that, at the death of Mirabeau, Mons. Vic-de-aze informed the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, that his *post mortem* appearance was as indicative of violent remedies as they were of absolute poison. And if any one desire to know how entirely the countenance and the character can deny each other to the greatest possible extent, let him turn to Clarendon's character of Sir Charles Cavendish, brother to the Marquis of Newcastle.

We may judge by Hogarth's picture of Thomson, that there were few intellectual qualities in his countenance ; and Bishop Atterbury says of Sir Isaac Newton, that there was nothing in his external appearance that indicated any thing beyond the common ; and that no one, who knew him not, would expect any penetration or sagacity.

Archbishop Laud, one would suppose, must have had a countenance expressive of ability at least. Yet, if Vandyck's picture of him is to be credited,—and that it is I suppose we may be entirely assured, since the university of Oxford offered the Wharton family four hundred pounds for it,—never was a man of less religious feeling ; never one of greater vacancy ; never one more absurdly shrewd. Blumenbach, too, had a countenance, exhibiting, at times, a vacancy almost amounting to imbecility.

Falk tells us, that he, one day, caught Goethe contemplating his collection of coins ; and that the poet confessed, that it gave him no small pleasure whenever

he lighted upon a countenance, the features of which expressed the character or acts of the person, as handed down to us in history. He must, therefore, have been often disappointed; for Claudius had not only a lively countenance, but one of majesty and authority: Nero had a noble aspect; and Commodus\* and Caracalla† were the most beautiful of their times. Yet what were the characters of all these? we need not insist. From these it is evident, that the countenance of a Pan may serve to foil the shoulders of an Apollo, and the form of a Maximin to disgrace the head of a Trajan. If we consult coins, gems, and medallions, Sylla might be taken for the father of Scipio, and Scipio himself for the brother of Antinous.

This contrariety was especially observable in Phocion. For, of all men, his countenance was the personification not only of severity, but of an austere severity. He was seldom known to smile; and never to laugh; yet his manners were bland and agreeable. No one was ever a greater lover of his country; few ever possessed a mind more under the discipline of benevolence; few ever delivered more just opinions; nor was any one ever more intensely animated with noble aspirations.

In all the portraits painted by Rembrandt, we do not recognize the head of one eminent person! In Holbein's the colour is admirable, and the likenesses, no doubt, precise; but the countenances are fixed. In regard to

\* Herodian, lib. i. c. ult. 'Forma corporis justa,' says Lampridius.

† Tristan, *Commentaires Historiques*.

likenesses, those portraits we have of Albert Durer, are, it must be confessed, finely conceived and finely executed; but they have scarcely any corresponding resemblances.

There are four portraits of Sixtus V., neither of them in character. There are two of Father Paul, by Zuccheri and Finelli. The second bears no resemblance to the first. There are three of Raffaele. If one is a likeness, the others are impostures. They cannot, we might suppose, depict the same person.

After we know the character of any one, it is easy to assure ourselves that his physiognomy indicates it, as fully as the flat nose, thick lips, frizzy hair, and a dark, glossy, skin, characterize the unmixed native of Africa. And this, perhaps, assisted the argument of Lord Chatham:—‘It is unjust, ungenerous, and unmanly,’ said Lord Holland, ‘to censure a man for that signature ‘which God has impressed upon his countenance; ‘and which, therefore, he can, by no means, remedy or ‘avoid.’ ‘I agree from my heart with the observation ‘of my fellow-member,’ answered Lord Chatham. ‘His ‘observation is pointed, judicious, and true. But there ‘are some,’ darting, we are told, his eagle eyes upon his antagonist, ‘upon whose face the hand of Heaven has ‘so stamped the mark of wickedness, that it were impiety not to credit it.’

Who lives, and yet is ignorant of Frederic the Great? Yet Mirabeau—seldom disposed to favour—says, that an unfeeling mind never had a look so mild, a voice so enchanting, an imagination so pliable and active. And this may serve to remind us of an assertion of an Italian



lady in reference to Lord Byron :—‘ *La nobile e bellissima sua fisionomia.*’ Cui bono? Yet often have we heard, and often do we still hear, that the artists of ancient Greece considered moral perfections as being invariably connected with symmetry of form and beauty of countenance.


Dante’s physiognomy was so very peculiar, that his enemies were accustomed to remark, that it could never be regarded as extraordinary, that Dante should paint the lower regions so well ; since his personal appearance evidently denoted that he had visited them ! Perhaps he did a little resemble the portrait of the unfortunate Archangel : for it cannot be denied, if we judge from his portraits, that

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‘ Deep on his front engraven  
Deliberation sat, and public care :  
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,  
Majestic, though in ruin.’

Hence Boccaccio describes his countenance as having had a pensive and melancholy expression ; grave and sedate. What, then, were the peculiarities of his countenance ?—large eyes, prominent cheek-bones, aquiline nose, dark complexion, the under lip projecting beyond the upper one, a long visage, black hair, and a curling beard.

The physiognomies of some, in fact, are so exceedingly forbidding, that Addison declared that he thought nothing more glorious than for a man to give a negative to the marks and signatures Nature has placed upon him : and this conjures up the spirit of Charles *the Fifth*.




‘ When I declared to his majesty,’ said Aretino in a letter to his friend, Montese, ‘ what injury painters and ‘ sculptors had done to his countenance,’—‘ I am not ‘ handsome by nature,’ interrupted the emperor; ‘ and ‘ am, therefore, obliged to those, who represent me with ‘ something almost brutish in my appearance; since it ‘ thence happens, that when I am seen by persons, ‘ I seem much less repulsive than they had expected to ‘ find me.’

## III.

SOME persons have been idle enough to judge men by their walk. Fools and coxcombs, whether male or female, may, perhaps, in some degree, be measured thus. But the movements of the second Marquis of L——, were superlatively dignified. Yet who could say the same of his mind? Those of the second Earl of L——, almost resembled the ‘ forced gait of a shuffling nag.’ Who, therefore, could imagine, from his motions, that he possessed a mind pre-eminently practical in matters of precedent and routine?

Campanella affected a curious art. It is thus described by Gafferill\* :—‘ Screw up your face, so as to ‘ counterfeit that of the person designed, and straight ‘ fancy yourself to have his hair, eyes, nose, mouth, and ‘ all other parts like him; and you will know what ‘ natural inclinations he has, and what his thoughts ‘ are, by the same you find in yourself during the time ‘ of your making such faces.’


\* *Curiosities*, p. 174. 1650.



Fulgentius says of Paul Sarpi, that though he had never studied physiognomy, yet, like an able musician, who knows, by the first touch, whether an instrument be good or bad, he knew ('con prestezza ammirabile') the views, interests, resolutions, and genius, of almost every person with whom he conversed. Tooke (author of the 'Diversions of Purley') aspired to the same distinction; with what success I know not; but I have been often told by one, who knew him well, that his features seldom betrayed what was passing within; and that he could be facetious or sarcastic with an unalterable brow.

The elder Scaliger is said to have had such skill in physiognomy, that he never failed in his judgments. Descartes (with equal veracity, no doubt), is said to have discovered the art of prolonging life to a period equal to that of the pyramids. Walsingham insisted that men's faces spoke as much as their tongues; and that countenances were, therefore, true indices. Louis XIV., also, was so credulous as to this art, that he paid particular attention to the physiognomical suggestions of his physician, De la Chambre; and the Earl of Pembroke was employed for his skill in the same way, in giving hints to James I. in regard to the characters of foreign ambassadors, when they first arrived at the English court.

I shall now give you the best anecdote on record, in respect to this art. Bajazet spared the life of John the Fearless. Wherefore?—on the recommendation of a Turkish physiognomist. 'Let him live,' said he to the *sultan*; 'for I see, by his lineaments, that more blood




‘ will be shed on his account, and more cruel wars  
‘ carried on, than can either be believed or hoped for.’  
The predictions of the physiognomist were, but too  
faithfully, fulfilled !

Some men have been, or have affected to have been,  
beyond the skill of physiognomists ; and of this num-  
ber was the Duc de Guise. ‘ Neither in my exile at  
‘ Rome,’ said he, ‘ nor during the time that I re-  
‘ mained at Naples, could any person observe the least  
‘ change or alteration in my countenance. The differ-  
‘ ent events, as well of my bad as good fortune, never  
‘ gave me the least uneasiness or inquietude ; having  
‘ always acted with the same *sang froid* in every thing  
‘ in which I was concerned, as if I had not the least  
‘ interest in it.’

Talleyrand is said to have the same command. Ro-  
bespierre, however, was so exceedingly conscious and  
sensitive, that he wore green spectacles to conceal his  
countenance, and was in the frequent habit of covering  
his face with his hands. In regard to Napoleon ; when  
in action and completely off his guard, no man’s coun-  
tenance, we are told, spoke more explicitly ; but when  
he thought himself observed, he is said to have had the  
power of assuming an indefinite smile and vacancy, not  
two removes from those of a bust.

Lavater was, doubtless, a man of genius ; but he  
has written more nonsense under the robe and colour  
of wisdom, than any highly-gifted man of his times.  
To judge men by their countenances may, as far as I  
know, be the faculty of some ; but to estimate them by  
the forms of their heads, the motion of their arms, and



their handwriting ! Yet a similar belief animated Launcelot de Maniban, General Paoli, and even Shennstone. In all these lines, they seem to have flattered themselves, that they possessed a truer map than botanists now have in respect to the geographical distribution of plants.

Shall we bring Aristotle into court ? A dissertation on this subject is printed in most collections of his works ; but of this dissertation it may be honestly said that it is (almost) impossible, that from the mental laboratory of the greatest and most profound of Greek philosophers should have emanated such a chaos of metaphysical rubbish. I say rubbish advisedly ; for it is not only at variance with Nature, but even with common sense, and the daily experience of every one that lives in civilized society. And let no man marvel at this judgment, who has not lost his time in reading the production to which I refer. It is astonishing !

Seeing tempers and humours, with casual and momentary emotions, through the medium of the features, on sudden, interesting, trying, or even common occasions, is very different from knowing the fixed character by the manner in which those features are permanently adjusted and composed. I ought, however, to be modest, and make my confession. I seldom judge men by their countenances. One of the most insidious that I have known might have sat to a Raffaele ; one of the best to a Caravaggio. I must know a man under various circumstances, before I undertake to give a final judgment in respect to him. Had Nero died the first year in which he came to the empire, he had passed

to posterity as the most virtuous of men. Had Titus died before the death of his father, even the taking of Jerusalem could never have screened him from our contempt; and had Constantine died in the magnificence of manhood, we had never known the extent to which power, pride, and sensual indulgence could disgrace the age of one of the most comprehensive intellects, that ever dignified an imperial station.

## CLXXVI.

## WHO CANNOT FOLLOW THEIR OWN LESSONS.

BISHOP WATSON recommended a residence in their sees to bishops; and yet lived, all the latter years of his life, as far from Landaff as the county of Westmoreland. In some things, the meanest of mankind are upon a level with the greatest. We can have as little positive conception of a perfect man, as of infinite duration or of infinite space.

Dr. Stewart says, in his 'Elements of the Human Mind\*', that those have excelled the most 'in the practice of the law, who have had at first the greatest antipathy to the study.' I am not aware of a single instance; but, for one lawyer that I have known, I dare to say the learned professor of moral philosophy knew ten.

\* Page 475.



## CLXXVII.

## ORDERS OF MEN IN RESPECT TO DEXTERITY.

THERE are men of address, men of dexterity, men of capacity, and men of ability; all different. Some are keen in searching their interests, in detecting flaws, in making retorts, and in penetrating characters less worldly than themselves. Some are acute in adapting arguments to occasions, and in the discovery of truth and error. Others are shrewd in the observance of folly, and in finding out the more dubious motives of other men's actions. Some are in the habit of combining and comparing; of illustrating, analyzing, and decomposing; and some are chiefly active, not in directing others to do what is right, but in enabling them to justify whatever may be wrong.

Knowledge of the world chiefly consists in having the skill to discern character, and the facility of detecting the arts, which influence what are called men of the world;—men, who think that all persons are to be used;—not trusted. Judging others by themselves, they estimate truth and untruth, vice and virtue, only by the profits and the benefits with which they are attended.

‘A life, all turbulence and noise, may seem  
To him that leads it wise, and to be praised;  
But wisdom is a pearl, with most success  
Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.’—*Cowper*.

## CLXXVIII.

## LOVERS OF UNCERTAINTY.

BOUHOURS thought that nothing can be beautiful which is not just, and founded on the real nature of things. This is a truism; hence we ought to appreciate the axioms which teach, that nothing goes so far in the happiness of our lives as to know things as they really are; that the best thing in the world to make men honest and wise is affliction; and that disappointment is the surest and most effective of tutors to bring men to their senses and themselves.

There is another point we ought to consider: it is this; that pain and pleasure are proportionable to the perceptions of persons, and not to be judged of in others by what we feel in ourselves. Where was the wisdom, then, in ——'s assertion, that —— must be much more miserable than he was, because —— was not certain of any thing two days together? 'I confess myself,' answered ——, when I told him of this, 'to be one of those who would lose half the enjoyments of life, if I felt them to be certain. Uncertainty to me is as sauce to the salmon.'

## CLXXIX.

## LOVERS OF FINESSE.

FINESSE is a mean, diminutive, and contemptible dwarf. Men (and women, too) succeed by it in little matters; the whole value of which is lost in one affair of magnitude. What says the Earl of Oxford, in re-



spect to Doddington?—That he was vain, fickle, ambitious, servile, and corrupt; that he had a knowledge of business, much wit, and great parts; but that, by a disposition to finesse, he threw himself out of all the great views which his large fortune and ability could not but have promoted, had he preserved the least shadow of consistency.

The lesson to be inferred from this needs no illustration.

## CLXXX.

## WHOSE LIVES ARE PERPETUAL SERIES OF STRUGGLES.

—‘ One sanguine tide scarce roll’d away,  
Another flows in regular succession.’

*Æschylus; Agamemnon; Potter.*

THERE are some, whose lives are series of perpetual struggles. They are bounded from a whirlpool to a hurricane; from the banks of a torrent to the edge of a precipice. To all men, thus insulted by fortune, and to those turned suddenly adrift, I would recommend the perusal of Herriott’s ‘Struggles through Life.’ He resembled a thistle, blown from one part of a heath to another. At one time he seemed to associate even with the Chiquère of South America; an animal which becomes a prey to the crocodile in the water, or to the tiger on land.

‘ Me howling winds drive devious, tempest tost,  
Sails ripp’d, seams opening wide, and compass lost;  
And, day by day, some current’s thwarting force  
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.’

*Cowper.*

That fortune is not to the wise is exemplified by the industry of Mr. Fox. He laboured with earnestness, and with almost superhuman power; but he could neither prevent the war with America, nor the still more disastrous war with France. It is happy, however, for the constitution of society, that obstacles and difficulties give keener edge to exertion.

————— ‘The waggon,  
It roll’d so proudly, that a passenger  
Curiously asked—“Now, what may that contain?”  
“Nothing but bladders, sir.”’

*Khemmitzer; Bowring.*

## CLXXXI.

WHO TURN ON THOSE WHO SUCCESSFULLY CONTINUE  
THEIR OWN GAME.

SOME there are, who, being the first to set a stone rolling, are also the first to upbraid those who continue the game, should the stone chance to roll to an effect different to the one intended. Thus acts the Duke of Suffolk when Cranmer shows the royal ring. It is the sign of royal favour. On seeing it, the duke instantly turns round upon his fellows in council:—

‘Tis the right ring, by Heaven! I told ye all,  
When we first put this dangerous stone a rolling,  
’Twould fall upon ourselves.’

